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THE AUGSBURG SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER.

VOL. V.

PHILADELPHIA, FEBRUARY, 1879.

No. 2.

PROF. H. LOUIS BAUGHER, EDITOR.

EDITORIAL BREVITIES.

—We erred in attributing the commendatory resolutions on the AUGSBURG TEACHER, published in our last number, to the "Synod of Northern Illinois." It was *Southern* Illinois that passed them, and, as its secretary naturally wants "honor to whom honor" is due, we cheerfully make the correction.

—Rev. J. I. Miller, Principal of "Staunton Female Seminary," gives in this number some account of the way in which its scholars are so generally brought to acknowledge "The King of Zion" as their Lord. Neither the methods used, nor the results are remarkable. They are only what the faithful word leads all believers to use, on the one hand, and to expect, on the other. Faithful teaching and loving watching for souls, whether in week-day or Sunday schools, will be graciously owned and rewarded. We have need, however, to pray with the disciples, "Lord, increase our faith!"

—Doubtless, during the holidays, many of our readers have seen and maybe received and sent beautiful cards with the compliments of the season expressed thereon. We have also seen beautiful cards used in church work. One lies before us now. It is a chromo engraving by Prang & Co., with black back-ground, containing a calla lily and lilies of the valley,

illuminating these words, "Sunday-school of St. Matthew's Lutheran church, N. W. corner Broad and Mt. Vernon streets, every Sunday afternoon at 2.30. COME!" These, and similar invitations with other illuminations, are handed wherever there is proper occasion; and they are so much a thing of beauty as naturally to attract scholars who do not already have a Sunday-school home. St. Matthew's has other cards also, for various purposes in church work; and we find the enterprising city churches in general using such means. We see no reason why they should be confined to the city. Let "the children of light" begin to be as wise in their generation as "the children of this world." Let the church more and more assert herself, and in doing this make use of all the forms of beauty and enterprising attractiveness that the art of the age affords.

—Dr. Hay's historical discourse concerning Christ Church, Gettysburg, Pa., is on our table. It was preached a year ago and is now "published by order of the trustees and church council." It is very neatly printed, by the "Star and Sentinel" office. The relation of this congregation to the whole church, through the institutions of learning located at Gettysburg, makes this address have a much

wider interest than that which is merely local. The *Lutheran Observer* is republishing it.

—Bare as were the trees at the opening of the year, there was an abundance of all kinds of *lesson leaves* from all parts of the land, showing that the International Lesson system is like a tree planted by the rivers of

water. When the Master comes looking for fruit from it, heaven forbid that he should find “nothing but leaves.”

—For the convenience of the teachers we reprint the hymns found in the Lesson Book, taken from our Book of Worship, and can do so in each issue, if desired.

LETTER FROM STAUNTON FEMALE SEMINARY.

DEAR BRO. BAUGHER: At your request I will try to furnish some account of the means by which the pupils of our school are nearly always all led to Christ.

For several years now we have not closed a session with more than one or two of the entire number not professing Christians. In fact, I may say this state of things has characterized Staunton Female Seminary throughout its whole history.

The awakening power of the Holy Spirit has in no single session failed to manifest itself.

As to the means through which so many of the school have, while pursuing their studies, been led to consecrate themselves to the service of their divine Master, it is not so easy to speak, at least definitely.

Prominently, however, I think may be mentioned the power of the earnest Christian lives of the teachers. I hold that for those teachers especially who reside in the seminary, and are constantly going in and out before the pupils, and thus imperceptibly but surely moulding the character of their pupils, piety is as truly an essential qualification as anything that can be demanded. In this respect I have been singularly blessed in my teachers, and am fully persuaded that to their godly conversation and interest in the spiritual welfare of the pupils, is due, in a large measure, the deep toned spirituality that marks the history of the seminary from year to year. And it matters not how heavy the welfare of souls

may lie upon the heart of the principal, or how faithfully he may labor for the spiritual good of his school; if, in the main, his teachers are destitute of the “ornament of a meek and quiet spirit,” his strength will, for the most part, be spent in vain.

Another factor, perhaps, leading to the result under consideration, is that we make the idea prominent from the first of each session, that we expect and will labor for the salvation of our pupils; and more, that it is their paramount duty to choose, like Mary, “the good part,” while they are cultivating the intellectual of their being. This has the advantage, at least, of bringing their mind into contact with the great object of their existence. They are thus constantly reminded that the interests of the soul here are not made subordinate to mental acquirements.

And still another, and that the divinely appointed means, is the prominence we try to give to the Word. Regularly on the Sabbath, and often at worship daily, do we seek to apply the truths which they read from the Bible.

If at any other time we find an unusual seriousness manifesting itself in any of the pupils, we then hold some brief services, it may be daily, or two or three times a week, as we may think best, to deepen any impressions for good already made, and to make clear as possible the plan of salvation. At such times we encourage the awakened to meet us in our study for conversation and prayer, or go to the rooms of

their teachers to inquire of them how God leads the soul longing to see his face into the light of the divine favor.

Thus in brief have we sketched the processes, as far as they may be formulated, through which God has blessed our labors to the conversion of the pupils of our school. We, however, disclaim any set or stereotyped mode. We discard, as far as possible, anything like machinery, and use only such means as we believe God warrants, and as the times and circumstances may call into exercise.

Where it is made prominent in the minds of teachers that their pupils must be won for Christ—and no others ought to obtrude into so holy a calling—then it matters little as to any systematized plan, that one all absorbing purpose will so condition everything that the teacher does, as to make it helpful towards the salvation of the pupil. May God speed the day when all our schools will be the efficient handmaids to the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ on earth.

Yours, fraternally,
J. I. MILLER.

ILLUSTRATION.

We, the true order of knighthood, are still climbing. The IDEAL is still above us, beyond us, yet visible and beckoning. We press forward, earnestly longing to touch it, yet ever, as we ascend the heights, greater heights appear, and it is still high above. The truth is, that in the striving we grow, and so our ideal expands. We, ourselves, acquire increased capacity, and it is reflected in the ideal, which grows greater and grander. We have climbed the lesser mountains, but lofty heights tower still; we have risen, have trod on clouds, see them far beneath us, but the sun is not yet clearly radiant—we must soar still higher. As we ascend, all around us are flowers—helpful truths blossoming into beauteous flowers—which we may gather to make the way easier. Reach down, now, right into the path, and pluck the little blue-eyed one—we call it Illustration.

Has it been your fate, as a child, to listen (or try to) week after week, to the dry statement of the lesson, varied occasionally with a prosier explanation? If so, you will reflect before you mete out the same to others—if reflection has never yet been yours, stop now! We perhaps fail to note the great gulf between the infant and mature mind, and so do not adapt our explanations to our pupil's capacity. We state the truths; yet teaching is not the mere recital of truth, but the presentation of it

within the range of the capacity of the learner, so that it may be grasped and retained. Language comprehensible to us will not do for a child. The child mind is before us, and we must arrange the truth for it. Plain, simple language is all powerful. A simple story-form of the lesson is excellent, but for deep, lasting impressions something more is necessary, namely, Illustration. So taught the great Teacher—"And he taught them by parables."

In illustrating the lesson, the easiest plan and the one most generally adopted (and very effective in the intermediate and Bible classes) is that of verbal explanations, elucidation of manners and customs, or stories of history that throw light and strength on the subject. This is the most natural way in which we talk to young people—the greatest craving in the minds of the little ones is for "stories." So a pleasant and interesting manner of illustration is by means of stories; stories, if possible, from the Bible (illustrate Scripture by Scripture, and so build up in biblical knowledge), stories from history, travel, art, and anecdotes and stories from every-day life, particularly the sphere of life familiar to the children—such an allusion lives during the week, and finds a sure place in the heart.

Verbal illustration, however, is excelled by visible, especially in the pri-

mary class. Children delight in seeing, in imagining, and there is a sure, short way from the eye to the heart. Maps, charts, pictures, objects, the blackboard, the slate, are excellent helps. The Leaf Cluster has pictures adapted to the International Lessons, and Prang, of Boston, has perforated manilla paper by which the picture is easily transferred to the blackboard. It is better, however, for each teacher to illustrate her *one great truth* by an original design. Such are always more suited to the lesson.

O, how easy to know that these means are good, but how hard to practice them! Hard? No, not when one becomes accustomed to it. This power to illustrate, of course, requires culti-

vation, and we cannot gain it in a day, nor by a single effort. Educate yourself in this direction. There are books full of help, but the truest means is by using ears and eyes, and pencil. Notice, remember, record life-incidents. Keep a memorandum book in which to record these observations; the habit once formed, will prove valuable. Keep a scrap-book to preserve stories and incidents. Keep an open, quick mind, and an open, loving heart. Let your love of the work *for* Jesus and *with* Jesus lead you to use all means to do better work. You will be led to talk with children, learn their ways of thought and expression, and so have more power over the child's priceless soul.

PUELLA.

WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE CAN DO FOR THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

The Young People's Religious Literary Society, of the Lutheran Church of Lewistown, organized by the pastor three years ago, has within the last year taken a new practical turn in connection with their religious exercises. Finding that improvements were much needed in the Sunday-school, and that the congregation were already pressed with the demands upon it, they concluded to inaugurate a series of monthly sociables, consisting of a literary entertainment lasting about an hour, with a tea-drinking and sociable at the close—admission to both 15, 20, or 25 cents, as the articles furnished were less or more expensive. These meetings have been quite a success; members and friends from all denominations attend them. During the evening all are made welcome, and the evening is enlivened with the best of music. These tea-drinkings are conducted entirely by the young people of the church, who are all in the Sunday-school. The two characteristics of the society are harmony and energy. By these efforts and a festival held by the same within one year, both departments of our Sunday-school have been re-painted, frescoed, carpeted and furnished generally. A fine new Bible was also presented to

the Sunday-school, and the entire outside of the church building refinished. Our young people have enjoyed no special advantages beyond what are in the reach of all. Many things we sadly need in our Sunday-school are just within our reach if we are wide-awake and determined to advance. Energy is certainly a quality most needed at the present time. Our schools in many places are not enjoying the facilities for improvement and becoming as efficient as they should be, for no other reason than that they are not making the efforts that some of their neighbors make. Are there not young people in all our churches who are willing to work for the Sunday-school? Several of the classes of our Sunday-school formed little societies for making fancy work, etc.; orders are solicited and the articles made as they are wanted. This money is appropriated to church benevolence. One noticeable feature in this work is the real enjoyment which the parties take in doing the work, when once they are enlisted. There is work for us all, if we are willing to perform it. May the Master fill our hearts with love, that we may be actively engaged in the work of building up his kingdom. R.

CHILDREN'S VOICES.

BY CHAS. H. GABRIEL.

What is sweeter to the ear than the sound of the voices of little children, singing sweet little songs in which all children so much delight? Whither shall we go to learn sweeter, purer and more full-heart music than we learn from the little ones? Heaven alone can produce it.

The child doesn't sing as the adult; it doesn't sing with its *voice alone*, but with its voice, heart and soul; it doesn't sing one thing and think of another, as nine out of ten of our older singers do. The child thinks of nothing but its song when it is singing; its whole soul enters into the exercise. See! bless the little ones, look at their faces while they sing a favorite song! What is sweeter, more heart-strengthening, more angelic? Oh, methinks the heavenly harpers above will have to tune their harps and voices anew to outvie these little ones!

Oh, why, then, are the children, to so great an extent, neglected? Why wait and spend so much time, labor and money with the adult, and leave the dear little ones out in the cold? Where is the person in the world that does not, who has not always a word, smile or kiss for the wee ones? If there be such a being in the world, he or she is not *human*; they have no claim on the common race of humanity.

Those we love, we like to see improve in every branch of education and art that will be a benefit to them in life. What will benefit a child more in this life and the life to come than a good practical knowledge of music? Singing is praising God; singing is obeying God; singing is worshiping God; music is holiness, godliness, purity, and sacredness; it is an ordinance of God. It is not a worldly invention. It originated in heaven.

Teach a child to sing when it is young; keep it in the path and knowledge of music, and when it arrives at mature years, it will have a smoother disposition, a more God-fearing spirit, and a better desire to *do* and *be* for

Jesus, than any other way it may be raised. A person cannot be a successful singer or writer on religious subjects, such as hymns, etc., unless he or she has the love of our Maker at heart. *Singing* to Jesus and *praying* to Jesus, are, virtually, the same thing. We can *sing* the thoughts and wishes of our hearts to as great advantage as we can *pray* them, and Jesus will hear and answer a plea just as quickly, be it sung or prayed; but we must be in *earnest*, whether we *pray* or *sing*. A whole-hearted singer is very discernible from an empty, thoughtless one. The song of a child has a far greater influence on the heart than the song of an adult, simply because its whole heart is in the song. How empty and meaningless is the song of him who sings with his lips and voice only; without a look at his face, your ear will tell, and to the deaf their eyes will tell, that his thoughts are far from the song he is singing. Not so with the child.

What will cheer us more than a song from infant lips when our spirits are cast down beneath the many weights of sorrow, trials and cares of this life? It is so healing, too, when our hearts are bleeding, rent by the chastening rod of a kind, loving Saviour. My dear friend, Robert Morris, writes:

"The birds might well be silent,
The sun refuse to shine,
If infant voices were to hush
Their happy notes divine."

God gave us our voices, and likewise he also gave the children their voices. Whatever God gives, he requires us to use to his honor and to his employ. Parents, in a measure, are responsible for their children. They must give them all the advantage possible, that they may improve the talent God has given them. Look at that child! *You* do not know but that some day, if *your* duty is done, it may be the brightest star the world has ever known. You cannot tell how much talent God saw fit to hide there for future development. Then, parents, do your duty;

it is a great one, but you must do it. God requires it at your hand. *You must be responsible before God.*

A child should be taught music, the same as geography, grammar or arithmetic, and the place these are taught is at our public and private day schools. Then most certainly music *must, will* and *shall* be taught there, and a great responsibility rests on our Boards of Education—one that has been sadly neglected; and they should “tremble and obey” the call from these infant lips, so pure, holy, and undefiled.

I hope the editor of this paper and all others papers of its kind, will continue to urge this great responsibility of educators upon them, until every one in our land and all other lands will prepare themselves for the great work that has been so long and sadly neglected.

The children must be musically educated, and we must do it, or we must answer for the neglect, when God makes up his jewels. Who will join the already widening ranks marching to the reform? The children are calling, time is flying, Jesus says “go and help them.”—*The Musical Advocate.*

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

It contains one hundred and fifty separate compositions. One of them extends to one hundred and seventy-six stanzas; another contains but a brace of verses. There are about two thousand five hundred verses in the whole collection. It is common to speak of the entire collection as the “Psalms of David,” whereas it is probable that only seventy-three psalms—or about one-half of the collection—are from the inspired pen of the king of Israel. Twelve of the sacred songs are ascribed to Asaph, a man of exquisite delicacy of feeling, who lived during David’s reign, about one thousand years before the advent of Christ. Two of them are ascribed to that universal genius, King Solomon. That “lofty and melancholy psalm,” the ninetieth, which has been chanted as the funeral march of so many a departed saint, is universally held to have been written by Moses himself. It is probably the old-

est of psalms, as Damascus is the oldest of cities. How magnificently this ancient lyric opens: “Lord! thou hast been the dwelling place of thy people in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God!” The authorship of sixty of the psalms is somewhat uncertain. A portion of them are ascribed to the “sons of Korah.” One is attributed to the pen of Heman, another to Ethan the Ezrahite, who both lived in the days of Solomon. But, however various the pens that inscribed them on the parchments, they all bear the same internal evidence of a celestial inspiration. Martin Luther styled the book of Psalms “an epitome of the Word of God—a little Bible in themselves.” They have been read, and sung, and studied, and prayed over, and wept over, for twenty-five centuries of time. The most ancient of them has been in existence for 3,000 years; the latest written was composed at least 2,500 years ago. While the Iliad of Homer and the Æneid of Virgil have been enjoyed by the intellects of the learned few, yet the praise-songs of David and Moses have been the heart-heritage and delight of the lowliest as well as the loftiest. Scholars, statesmen and poets have all united in extolling the incomparable beauty of these songs of Zion. Lamartine, in his florid French, exclaims: “The Book of Psalms is a vase of perfume broken on the steps of the temple, and shedding abroad its odors to the heart of all humanity. The little shepherd has become master of the sacred choir of the universe. A chord of his harp is to be found in all choirs, resounding forever in unison with the echoes of Horeb and Engedi. David is the psalmist of eternity; what a power hath poetry when inspired by the Almighty God!”—*The Independent.*

A. B. F. M.—At the late meeting of the American Board of Foreign Missions, in Milwaukee, 1,500 delegates were present. The Board now has 16 missions, 79 stations, 529 out-stations, 248 churches, and about 13,747 church members. Last year \$450,000 was expended in its work, besides a payment of \$48,000 of indebtedness that existed at the beginning of the year.

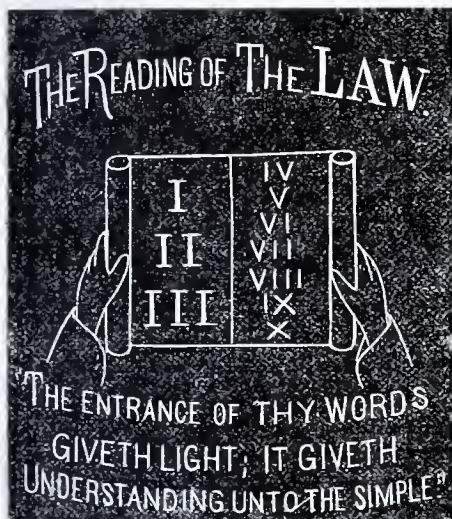
Lessons for February.

COMMENTS BY PROF. H. L. BAUGHER. BLACKBOARD ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. C. STOCK, CARLISLE.

THE READING OF THE LAW.

February 2.

Nehemiah viii. 1-8.



COMMENTS ON THE LESSON.

We have seen that, notwithstanding the hindrances from the Jews' enemies without and the collusions with them on the part of persons within the city, Nehemiah pressed on, resisting all the temptations brought to bear upon him, until the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month, Elul. Nehemiah put the city under proper government, making special provisions in view of its weak condition. For, it must be remembered, "the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded." The whole number of returned captives was less than 50,000, and of these many were settled in other cities. So we find them at the time of our lesson, which was at the close of the sixth month of the year of Nehemiah's coming to Jerusalem. This month closed the civil year, 445 B. C. The seventh month of the religious year was the first month of the civil year. It was called Tishri, and corresponded with the latter part of our September and the beginning of October; it was the most sacred month of the Jewish year, the festival month above all

others, opening with the feast of Trumpets, which was closely followed by the Day of Atonement, and this, presently, by the feast of Tabernacles, the Jews' "Thanksgiving day."

Verse 1. Accordingly the month opens with

A Mass Meeting.

ALL THE PEOPLE GATHERED THEMSELVES TOGETHER, from all their several cities, with one accord, AS ONE MAN, to Jerusalem. BEFORE THE WATER GATE. Situated, it seems, in the southern side of the external wall of the temple enclosure, and receiving its name from its being the way by which the water for the temple service was brought in from reservoirs near by, was a STREET or open space, where the meeting was held. This verse reads very much like the first verse of our first lesson this year. Compare the two. Notice the popular character of this meeting. EZRA, from whose book we have had several lessons, but of whom, personally, little has yet been said, was in the city at this time. He had come thither twelve years before, commissioned by Artaxerxes to execute the law of God in Judea, teach it to the people, and beautify the temple. He had instituted many reforms, intended to separate the people more thoroughly from all other people; but seems to have gone back again to Persia, and now to have come again just in time for the occasion of our lesson. For we do not read of his being at all connected with the rebuilding of the walls, and we find that there had been a relapse from the reforms he instituted; and this is the first mention we have of him in the book of Nehemiah. Although he was a priest, by descent, and had been a Persian judge, yet his distinguishing attribute is THE SCRIBE. "The Scribes," says Stanley, "had in some form long existed. They had origin-

ally been the registers or clerks by whom the people or the army were numbered. They then rose into higher importance as royal secretaries. Then, as the prophetic writings took a more literary form, and the calamities of the falling monarchy and the subsequent exile stimulated the nation to collect and register the fragments of the past, they took a conspicuous place by the side of the Prophets. * *

* But in Ezra it (the office of Scribe) received an importance altogether unprecedented. In him the title came to mean the man of the Book. * * *

* * From the time of Ezra the Scribes never ceased. The intention of their office, as first realized in him and his companions, was the earnest endeavor to reproduce, to translate, to represent in the language of his own time, the oracles of sacred antiquity; to ascertain the meaning of dark words, to give life to dead forms, to enforce forgotten duties; to stimulate the apathy of the present by invoking the loftiest spirit of the past. Such was the ideal of the 'Minister of Religion' henceforth; and when the Highest Teacher described it in his own words, he found none better than to take the office of Ezra, and say: 'Every Scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto an householder which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.' " The people asked Ezra to BRING THE BOOK OF THE LAW OF MOSES, not as an ordinary law book, but one WHICH THE LORD HAD COMMANDED TO ISRAEL, a book divine and of religious obligation upon them. The book here referred to was the Pentateuch, or first five books of our Bible. From Deut. xxxi. 10, 11, we learn that the public reading of this law was to take place at Jerusalem every seven years at about this time. But of course this custom had long fallen into disuse. Now it was revived.

The Proceedings.

Verses 2 and 3. Doubtless Ezra was glad of this opportunity, and, readily responding to the people's appeal, BROUGHT THE LAW, which was usually written in parallel columns on parchment rolled up on two sticks, one at each end. THE CONGREGATION con-

sisted BOTH OF MEN AND WOMEN, and that not only the older people, but all THAT COULD UNDERSTAND were there. The Bible is for all classes, and to be read openly. FROM THE MORNING, early, as soon as it was light (for so the original signifies), UNTIL MID-DAY—for nearly six hours—HE READ THEREIN, and, though so long continued, THE EARS OF ALL THE PEOPLE were open to and attentive TO THE BOOK OF THE LAW. This was a long Bible reading; but Bibles in those days were scarce, and the opportunity was one in a long while.

Verse 4. A PULPIT OF WOOD—evidently a large raised platform—had been prepared for the occasion, just as we see now at mass meetings out of doors. Upon it EZRA, THE SCRIBE STOOD, AND BESIDE HIM, ON HIS RIGHT HAND AND ON HIS LEFT, thirteen other persons, whose names are here given, and who probably were the head ones of the course of priests that was then serving at the temple. These were his supports, we may say, and they may have taken turns with him at the reading, although we are not told so.

Verse 5. OPENED THE BOOK, by unrolling it some distance, IN THE SIGHT OF ALL THE PEOPLE. He, being raised above them by the platform, could be seen by the whole crowd. Thereupon ALL THE PEOPLE STOOD UP, rising from the crouching positions they had, in Oriental fashion, been occupying over the wide area on which they were assembled. Standing was a position of respect and attention. Among the Germans it is still customary to rise and stand while the Gospel is read.

Verse 6. The proceedings began with a Gloria, a Doxology, a prayer of Thanksgiving. EZRA BLESSED, gave thanks to, THE LORD, THE GREAT GOD; and in response ALL THE PEOPLE shouted AMEN, AMEN, subscribing to what had been said, and making it their own act of worship. They accompanied this WITH LIFTING UP THEIR HANDS, an attitude of prayer. So the Psalmist says (lxiii. 4), "I will lift up my hands in thy name." See also Ps. xxviii. 2, cxxxiv. 2; Lam. iii. 41, and the pictures on the walls of

the catacombs of Rome. Then came the sense of unworthiness, which led them reverentially to BOW THEIR HEADS, WITH THEIR FACES TOWARD THE GROUND, more prone than is usual among us, and so they WORSHIPED THE LORD. The Psalmist says, "O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Worship is an act of the soul, not of the body; but where true reverence exists, it will manifest itself even in posture. Some attitudes are by common consent more worshipful than others.

Verses 7 and 8. Here is a list of thirteen others, Levites (see ix. 4), who assisted. THEY CAUSED THE PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND THE LAW. They may have stood here and there throughout the crowd, repeating what was not distinctly heard, and explaining Hebrew words that were difficult for those who had been brought up in a foreign land. Observe that the word "*stood*," in the last sentence of verse 7, is not in the original. It is not to be supposed that the people stood all the while. During the explanations they likely sat, as was the custom. But they kept their places attentively during the whole morning. We are reminded by this scene of Jehoshaphat's government education bureau, sent traveling through the land, to teach the people God's law, 466 years before this, and of "The Scriptures Found and Searched," in Josiah's time, 179 years before, when the pious king assembled "all the people, great and small," and read them the law of God. Verse 8 sums up the whole proceedings, and gives us three characteristics of good preaching. THEY READ IN THE BOOK, IN THE LAW OF GOD, DISTINCTLY. Then they GAVE THE SENSE, explaining whatever needed it; AND CAUSED THEM TO UNDERSTAND THE READING, in its *applications* to them. *Read, explain, apply.*

This scene is more like what we call "preaching" than anything we have yet had in the Old Testament history. Stanley says: "Doctors, Pastors, Evangelists, Catechists, Readers, Revivalists, studving, preaching, convert-

ing, persuading—all these, in these their most spiritual unctions, have their root, not in Aaron's altar, nor even in Samuel's choral school, but in Ezra's pulpit." The main thing in religious meetings ought to be the word and worship of God. "Faith cometh by hearing; and hearing by the word of God;" and "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Then comes the earnest question, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" Here comes in the church's great commission—*our work*—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature!" What are you doing, to fulfill that commission? What are your scholars doing? Ask them. Tell them how. There are many ways of *going into all the world*, and many ways of *preaching the gospel*, for every creature to hear. Help your scholars to understand and be about some of these ways.

Reflections.

1. It is a good sign when "all the people" want to hear God's Word.

2. How easy it is for us to hear and read God's Word! A whole Bible can be bought now for twenty-five cents.

3. Some preachers do not "read in the book" at every public service, for fear, perhaps, of making the exercises too long. Better *shorten the sermon*! Let the people always have a goodly portion of God's Word. An excellent minister, gone to heaven some years ago, said he always read a good deal of the Bible, for then he was sure the people got something good.

4. There is, probably, in a great deal of modern preaching, too much of *man's thinking*, the preacher's opinions, and too little bringing out of "the sense" of the divine Word.

5. A man must "understand the reading" himself, before he can make the people do so. "The priest's lips," the teacher's lips, "should keep knowledge." To think that anybody can get up and expound the Scriptures, or that expository preaching requires little or no study, is a *fatal mistake*!

6. The central object in Protestant churches is *God's Word*; not so in Romish churches. And when the Word is read in Romish churches, it is *in an unknown tongue*, notwithstanding the fact that there is hardly a language or dialect into which the Bible has not now been translated.

7. Train the young people to reverent feelings and reverent attitudes when God's Word is read or he is worshiped. Have your Sunday-school orderly and impressive even in externals; these may affect the heart.

THE KEEPING OF THE SABBATH.

February 9.

Nehemiah xiii. 15-22.

H eep holy	S A B B A T H
E xhort others	
E dify one another	
P ray to be in the Spirit on The B Day.	
I nstruct your children	
N eglect no service	
G lorify GOD	

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON.

Nehemiah first went to Jerusalem as its Governor, in the year 445 B. C., the twentieth of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus. He went for a definite time, as by agreement with the king, and in that monarch's thirty-second year returned to the Persian capital. In that period of twelve years Nehemiah had accomplished much for Judah and Jerusalem. On his return to Persia, however, there occurred a relapse from the promising condition in which the late Governor left them. How long he remained in Persia we do not know, but a sufficiently long time for serious evils to have arisen and gained strength. We see here how much good one earnest, fearless, determined, godly man can do, especially when put in position of influence and power, and, on the other hand, how soon a whole people, left to themselves, will turn to folly. No sooner had Nehemiah returned than he was obliged to inaugurate reforms

and carry them out with a strong hand. People had allied themselves with Ammonites and Moabites, and disregarded the perpetual law forbidding any of these tribes from coming into the congregation of God, and the high-priest Eliashib, had even allowed the Ammonite slave Tobiah, one of the chief opponents of Nehemiah's work, to take up lodgings in one of the rooms of the temple; and the appointed dues were not given to God's ministers, so that they had to resort to secular labor for support. Nehemiah began at once to suppress these evils. The turning of Tobiah incontinently out of the temple, along with his "household stuff," was soon and decisively done. Other things required more time and tact, but they were set about. Sabbath desecration was one of the evils he encountered, and his treatment of it is told in our lesson to-day.

Sabbath-breaking Reproved.

Verse 15. IN THOSE DAYS. After his return to Jerusalem; probably twenty years after his first going up to build the walls. SAW I, IN JUDAH. Nehemiah kept his eyes open, and did not find it convenient *not to see* transgressions of the law that were going on in his province. How well if all officers and magistrates were as observant! **TREADING WINE-PRESSES.** The grapes were trodden in a wide, not necessarily very deep, vat, whence the juice flowed into another lower vat. These vats were usually cut out of rock; and bare human feet was the treading power. Now, that they were doing this **ON THE SABBATH**, was the wrong. Other forms of labor he also observed going on on that day, such as **BRINGING IN SHEAVES AND LADING ASSES**; taking their harvests into the city to be threshed. There was room to thresh it there now, the population being comparatively so small. **WINE, GRAPES AND FIGS**, products of the land, and all kinds of **BURDENS** were borne about, **BROUGHT INTO JERUSALEM** for purposes of business and traffic, and all **ON THE SABBATH DAY**, in shameless violation of the express letter of the law, which said,

“Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, * * * nor thy cattle.” Our last lesson gave account of the reading of the law to old and young, which was continued more days than one; and further on (x. 31) we read that, in renewing their covenant, the people had expressly declared they would honor the Sabbath. These transgressors could not plead ignorance of the law. AND I TESTIFIED AGAINST THEM, reprovèd them, as became him to do both as ruler and as citizen; for the law said, “Thou shalt in any wise rebuke the neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him.”

Verse 16. THERE DWELT MEN OF TYRE ALSO THEREIN. Tyre was a Phœnician city on the Mediterranean coast, a long way north from Jerusalem. It was a commercial centre. Between Phœnicia and Israel there had been more or less intercourse from the days of Solomon, and we find the same existing long after this time, and referred to in Acts xii. 20. The Phœnicians were great tradesmen; and a number of them seem now to have settled in Jerusalem. The eastern Mediterranean abounded with fish, and these Tyrians BROUGHT FISH AND ALL MANNER OF WARE, all kinds of commodities, AND SOLD ON THE SABBATH. Their religion was polytheistic, idolatrous and immoral, and the Sabbath was nothing to them. But their customers were THE CHILDREN OF JUDAH, and their trade was IN JERUSALEM, the holy city.

Verse 17. To reprove Phœnicians on religious grounds would have been pointless; but Nehemiah CONTENDED WITH THE NOBLES OF JUDAH, the principal men, the leading families, who seemed to make no conscience of buying from these tradesmen on the Sabbath day. Now Jewish buyers were worse than Tyrian sellers; for they knew better and believed (professedly) in the sacredness of the day, whereas the Tyrians were heathen. Besides, there would soon be no selling if there were no buyers; it takes both to support traffic, and one class is as guilty as the other, where the traffic is illegal.

But it was a struggle to get these principal men to cease countenancing the EVIL THING.

Verse 18. DID NOT YOUR FATHERS THUS? Experience and observation should teach men and make them wise. So Nehemiah recalls Israel's history. Sabbath breaking had been, at various periods, a crying sin among them, which the prophets denounced most severely. ALL THIS EVIL, everywhere apparent in the city and in the land; their overthrow, Nehemiah ascribes to the people's disregard of God's commandments, one of which was to hallow the Sabbath day. Jeremiah, before Judah's captivity, had said, “But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.” How minutely that had been fulfilled! The evidence was clear before their eyes: YET YE BRING MORE WRATH, said the good Governor, UPON ISRAEL, BY PROFANING THE SABBATH. Like causes produce like results; and the breaking of God's commandments is the prelude to ruin. Some sins seem to be visited upon men in this life more than others, and history points to Sabbath-breaking as one of them.

Sabbath-breaking Restrained.

Verse 19. Besides reprovèing the Sabbath-breakers, Nehemiah took measures to restrain them from pursuing their evil way. He COMMANDED THAT THE GATES SHOULD BE SHUT. As the city was entirely walled, this would prevent ingress and egress of animals. There often was in the great double door a wicket through which pedestrians could pass when the gate proper was closed. The gates of oriental cities were places of resort for idlers as well as seats of justice, and adjacent to them was always an open space used as a market-place for country produce. A city gate, with its adjoining towers and rooms and open courts, was a place of more imposing appearance and important transactions than we, unused to them, would naturally suppose. Nehemiah had them

closed from the time it BEGAN TO BE DARK the day before—for they counted a day from evening to evening—TILL AFTER THE SABBATH; and to prevent the carrying in of burdens by the smaller gate kept open for pedestrians, he set some of his own private domestics there to enforce the prohibition.

Verses 20 and 21. How did the plan work? ONCE OR TWICE, several times, the traffickers LODGED WITHOUT, thinking, perhaps, that persons would come out and buy, or hoping the restriction would not last long. But Nehemiah was not to be turned aside from his laudable purpose. He reprov'd them and threatened to arrest, LAY HANDS ON, them if they came thus again. Seeing his unyielding determination they desisted from their course.

Verse 22. That this vigilance might be permanent and not relaxed, THE LEVITES were put to the duty of watching the gates and so watching for the sanctity of the Sabbath. For this, as a holy duty, they were to CLEANSE THEMSELVES of ceremonial defilements. The lesson closes with a prayer of Nehemiah, repeated on several occasions. It is not a boast, but a reminder of his deeds which, louder than words, bespoke his fidelity to God. He claimed to be God's servant, and further prays, SPARE ME ACCORDING TO THE GREATNESS OF THY MERCY. God's mercy is toward them that fear him and think upon his name. Nehemiah claims to have been such a one and claims the promise, which he owns to be of mercy, grace, and not of debt or desert.

Reflections.

1. Nehemiah was not satisfied merely to proclaim the law; he *enforced* it, and that in opposition to the sellers from without and the families of the "nobles" within. He was not *afraid* to do right. We have, in another sphere, a sad instance of failure to exercise proper authority, in Eli's case, of whom it is said, "His sons made themselves vile and he *restrained* them not." He merely reprov'd them. Let all who are in authority, whether in family, school, church or civil government, or wheresoever, here learn a lesson.

2. The desecration of the Sabbath was preceded by their withholding their portion from God's ministering servants and a forsaking of the house of God. Sin leads to more sin, and neglect of duty to still further neglect.

3. The institution of the Sabbath dates from the creation, and is not Jewish. "The Sabbath was made *for man*," said its Author. Consequently it will be ever binding. That the first day of the week is observed by the Christian church instead of the last, does not affect the principle and law of keeping the *seventh* day. There is a Jewish Pharisaic method and spirit of observing the day, and also a Christian, free, loving method and spirit, illustrated by the teachings and example of the Master. The Christian Sabbath, or Lord's day, is a day of rest from usual labor and from traffic, to be spent in glad, happy contemplation of God and his works, and devoted, in a good degree, to his public worship.

4. Even in our Sabbath-keeping land there is a great deal of trafficking of which Christians cannot entirely clear themselves. We have seen that buyers are as bad as sellers; and there are families who report themselves unable to go to church, etc., because employed preparing oysters, ice cream, etc., for church people! Cigars, tobacco, soda-water, etc., are sold on the Lord's day, with no more right, religious or civil, than other traffic could be engaged in. The love of money, on the one hand, and of personal gratification, on the other—how they slight God's law and man's good!

5. The hallowing, in some form, of a seventh day, is found among nations that could know nothing of the law on Sinai. Josephus says: "No city of Greeks or barbarians can be found which does not acknowledge a seventh day's rest from labor." Philo says: "The seventh day is a festival to every nation." And it is written in the physiological constitution of man and domestic animals that they *need* such rest. Every attempt to deprive them of it has worked disadvantageously to body and soul, to prosperity, natural and spiritual.

6. Sir Matthew Hale, Chief Justice of England, one of the greatest and best judges that ever attained this dignity, declared that, of all persons convicted of capital crimes, while he was upon the bench, he found few who did not confess that they began their career of wickedness by neglect of the Sabbath.

7. Whilst our laws do not say what shall be done on the Christian Sabbath, they do say what shall *not* be done; and the forbidden things are just such as Nehemiah reprov'd and restrained. It becomes all good governors and citizens to enforce this law, fraught with such blessings to mankind.

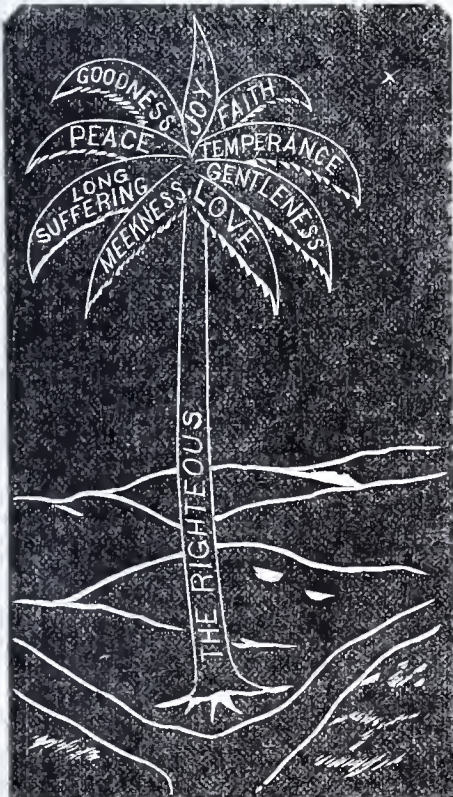
THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

February 16.

Psalm i. 1-6.

BLESSED IS THE MAN

Walk That Stand Sitt **ETH** Counsel the Ungodly not in the Way OF Sinners Seat the Scornful,



Explanation. — The streams of water around the roots of the tree, indicate the pros-

perity of the righteous. Being rooted and grounded in Love—bearing the fruit, of the Spirit, Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness and Temperance.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON.

A Psalm, according to its Greek etymology, means a song sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument. The "Psaltry" was such an instrument. The Psalms are sometimes called "The Psalter." The Hebrews called them "The Book of Praises." This was the Hebrews' Hymn book; and, as in our hymn-books, there were different authors who composed the various poems constituting the book. The "sweet singer of Israel," David, being the largest and most eminent contributor thereto, the whole is sometimes called "The Psalms of David," or simply "David" (Heb. iv. 7). This name, probably, was attached to the first collection of Psalms, made, likely, by Solomon, and consisting altogether of David's productions; and the name afterwards attached to this whole portion of Scripture. The authorship of some of the Psalms is given in the introduction thereto or readily gathered from their contents; while some of them cannot with certainty be ascribed to this or that writer. The whole came, at last, to be divided into five books, comprising respectively Ps. i-xli., xlii.-lxxii., lxxiii.-lxxxix., xc.-cvi., cvii.-cl. This arrangement into books is not found in our English Bibles, and it is an imperfect one, some of the Psalms being out of their connection and place. Another division, according to subject and contents, makes them sixfold, Songs of Praise in general, Songs intended specially for the Temple service, Songs of a general religious, and moral character, Elegies, that is, psalms of sorrow, united with prayer for help, Messianic Psalms, prophetic of the Christ, and Historical Psalms. The Psalms are quoted in the New Testament oftener than any other Old Testament book, and they are probably more read by Christians than any other book of the Bible. Luther, in his preface to the Psalter, calls it, "THE BOOK of all good men; and every one, whatever his circumstances may

be, finds in it psalms and words suited to his circumstances, and which are to him just as if they had been put there on his very account, and in such a way that he himself could not have made or found or wished for better." The first Psalm seems to form a suitable preface to the whole book. Its authorship has been assigned to David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and even later writers. We will not err in calling it a Psalm of David. It describes the happy man and shows him to be the righteous man. "He is described," says J. A. Alexander, "both literally and figuratively, positively and negatively, directly and by contrast, with respect both to his character and his condition, here and hereafter. The compression of all this into so short a composition, without confusion or obscurity, and with a high degree of graphic vividness, shows what the psalm is in a rhetorical or literary point of view, apart from its religious import and divine authority. Its moral design is both didactic and consolatory." The Psalms, in common with Hebrew poetry in general, are not characterized by rhyme or metre, but marked by *parallelisms*: that is, the same thought is repeated in another form in the same verse; and these parallelisms explain one another. They also were thus admirably adapted to responsive singing. This first psalm is divided into two general divisions of three verses each, and in each verse we see parallelisms, positive or negative. Respecting the person here described, let us look, first, at

His Character.

Verse 1. It is first set forth negatively. HE IS THE MAN THAT WALKETH NOT IN THE COUNSEL OF THE UNGODLY. And man's *walk* is his conduct, his habitual course of life, particularly his *activities*. The Scriptures are full of this use of the word. Among the things declared by Micah as belonging to God's simple requirements (Mic. vi. 8), is, "to walk humbly with thy God." Paul says (2 Cor. v. 7), "For we walk by faith, not by sight," and John (1 Jno. ii. 6) says, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walked." And Jesus said (John viii. 12), "He that

followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Such passages will help to impress the use of the word "walketh" in the text. To walk in the counsel of the ungodly, is to live according to their principles and their example, to set our affections on the same things they do and show ourselves to be of their number. Dr. Alexander explains "the ungodly" here to mean "those who positively violate a rule by disorderly conduct." The hero of our Psalm does not behave like these. NOR STANDETH IN THE WAY OF SINNERS. As an associate with them. "The word translated *sinner*," says Alexander, "properly denotes those who fall short of the standard of duty." NOR SITTETH IN THE SEAT OF THE SCORNFUL. This class are "scoffers, those who treat religion with contempt." Among these he does not tarry or throw in his lot. Walking, standing and sitting mark the three chief conditions of man when awake, and so these terms cover his responsible life. "The ungodly," "sinners," and "the scornful," moreover, comprise all evil character and living. Further, some see in these terms the *progress* of evil character—first *walking*, and listening to *counsel*; then *standing*, spending long time with, almost persuaded; at last *sitting down*, settled among the evil. Some refer the terms "ungodly," "sinners" and "scornful" also to increasing degrees of evil character. There may also be a progression in the terms "counsel," "way," and "seat." Our common proverbs, "Birds of a feather flock together," and "A man is known by the company he keeps," illustrate how character is popularly judged by external signs. Evil associations do not characterize the man here described.

Verse 2. Here we come to the positive signs of his character. BUT here turns us to another phase. HIS DELIGHT—and he has delights—his pleasure and happiness, IS IN THE LAW OF THE LORD (Jehovah). "The law of the Lord" in those days was the Pentateuch. For us it is the whole Bible. The law of the Lord is an expression of his character, is founded on his perfections. Whoever loves him delights

in his law. People are known, and may know themselves, by their affections. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." What are our loves and our hates? Such persons are we. God delights in his own perfect law, and so does the godly man, he who has come into harmony with God; he loves what God loves, and hates what God hates. He says, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We express our delight in God's law in our confessional prayer, where we say, "All whose commandments are just, necessary and good." And, in evidence of what was before said, IN HIS LAW DOTH HE MEDITATE DAY AND NIGHT. He not only reads it, but hides it in his heart, treasures it up in his thought, and it enters into his mental composition. By day and by night, in prosperity and in adversity, constantly, God's law is with him, a theme of meditation and guide of life. See Josh. i. 8, of which this Psalm seems to be a poetical rendering and enlargement. Now that we have God's law exemplified and fulfilled in Christ Jesus, even how much more of a delight is the whole Bible to the godly person—not so much its words or outward form, but its deep, satisfying, saving truths; its commands and threatenings as well as its promises and hopes, its justice as well as its mercy!

Secondly, let us look at

His Blessedness.

Verse 1. The Psalm opens with an admiring expression thereof. BLESSED, or, *Oh, the blessednesses*—of such a man! What a happiness is his! The desire to be happy is universal. To reach this consummation every one is striving and hoping. Here is a sure recipe for it. Possess the character described, and you shall have the blessedness. Who are the happy people in the world? Look around and see! Are they found in courses or places of vice? Are the despisers of God and his law happy? Are the drunken, the unclean, the revelers, the murderers, the envious, the angry, the proud, the hateful, the infidel—are these happy? Are the rich, the noble, the great, for these distinctions happy? Is not happiness, after all, found only in Christian hearts and

Christian homes, where, in loving condescension he dwells "from whom all blessings flow?" "Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." How the Bible is freighted with joy and happiness for the believer! Even outward discomforts and poverty cannot take away the blessedness of the child of God and heir of heaven.

Verse 3. The godly man is compared to A TREE, a frequent figure in the Scriptures. The illustrations of the Bible are generally taken from nature and well known scenes. This is not a wild tree, but one PLANTED with care BY (on or over) THE RIVERS, streams or channels, OF WATER—in a most favorable spot for growth, vigor and fruitfulness. This indicates the divine culture bestowed upon the godly. Notice in this verse the use of "his" for "its," this latter word not being in use when our Bible was translated. This tree responds to the culture bestowed upon it. It BRINGETH FORTH HIS FRUIT IN HIS SEASON: HIS LEAF ALSO SHALL NOT WITHER. "The green foliage," says Delitzsch, "is an emblem of faith, which converts the water of life of the divine Word into sap and strength; and the fruit an emblem of works, which gradually ripen, and scatter their blessings around. A tree that has lost its leaves does not bring its fruit to maturity. * * * * What a richly-flowing brook is to the tree that is planted on its bank, such is the Word of God to him that devotes himself to it: it makes him, according to his position and calling, ever fruitful in good and well-timed deeds, and keeps him fresh in his inner and outward life." The main design, however, of this whole verse, is to indicate the outward prosperity of the man before described; and, dropping the figure, the writer sums all up in the last clause—WHATSOEVER HE DOETH SHALL PROSPER. Do experience and observation confirm this statement? Is outward prosperity an accompaniment of godliness? Yes; and the exceptions are rather apparent than real. Prosperity, however, does not exclude trials, and must be measured by a true standard. It is said of Joseph in Egypt and in

prison, "The Lord was with him; and that which he did the Lord made it to prosper." Godliness *hath* the promise of the life that now is, and it is no *empty* promise. But it must not be expected that such character supervening will obliterate the natural and physical consequences of *previous* different character. God will make us happy and prosperous in this life, *if we let him!*

Now we come to

A Contrast,

which heightens the former description.

Verse 4. THE UNGODLY ARE NOT SO, either in character or condition. A fruitful, flourishing tree cannot properly represent them. They are LIKE THE CHAFF, which is dead and useless, WHICH THE WIND DRIVETH AWAY. It is not gathered into garner. It is trodden under foot or burned. It has no value except as it protects the grain until the harvest.

Verse 5. THEREFORE. Because of their worthless character. THE UNGODLY SHALL NOT STAND, hold their ground, remain, IN THE JUDGMENT. God knows them now; he is not mistaken about them; but when the time of judgment comes, when the harvesting and winnowing is, at the last great day, they shall not abide. So said John concerning Jesus (Matt. iii. 12.), "Whose fan is in his hand and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." NOR SINNERS IN THE CONGREGATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS. This is the parallel clause, containing the same idea as the former. "The congregation of the righteous" is "the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven," represented here by the church militant, in which, indeed, the ungodly and sinners are often found, but from which they will be forever separated when it becomes triumphant.

Verse 6. FOR THE LORD KNOWETH the nature and end of THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS, and he is pledged that it shall be glorious. He looks with loving approbation upon the righteous, and will give them "an expected end." The verb may be taken in both its usual and its higher sense. There will

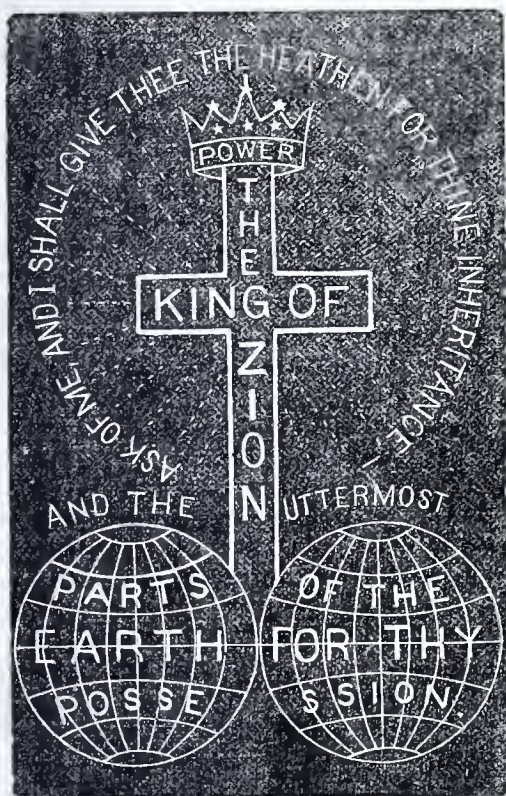
be those in the great decision of men's destinies, to whom the Lord will say, "I know you not!" BUT THE WAY OF THE UNGODLY SHALL PERISH, with all that are upon it. It leads to destruction and ends in ruin. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." God knows what is right and will end in happiness; and here he hath told us. Let us walk by this rule. The way of holiness is the way of happiness. If any one meets us with the distrustful exclamation, "Behold, these who prosper in the world are the ungodly" (Ps. lxxiii. 12), let us have them wait awhile and see how it will end. "Increase in riches," moreover, is by no means synonymous with increase in happiness. There are many other and better tokens of prosperity. "The path of the just is as the shining light that," even though clouds may now and then intervene, yet "shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The perfect day is when the Sun of Righteousness is in the meridian, and all persons and things reflect his glorious light.

BE ACTIVE.—Begin with little things—in your family, in your church circle, with your neighbors, who will be aided by even a kind nod, or friendly call. As we work on, it is wonderful how our powers of doing good service grow. The ready man or woman soon becomes the prominent person of his circle—always in demand, usually respected and appreciated. The great intellect may shine and overpower at times; but it is readiness and alacrity that are needed for everyday work. We need to do something not immediately connected with our daily work, as a change and rest. There is little relief in brooding over our labor or business, as we come home at night; but new energy and life come from taking some new work in hand. A willingness to assist in carrying on the improvements and charities in a community, lending a helping hand where needed, will twice bless—by the positive good rendered, and the reflex good received. Be active. Better wear out than rust out.—*Presbyterian Banner.*

February 23.

Psalm ii. 1-12.

THE KING OF ZION.



COMMENTS ON THE LESSON.

That this Psalm was written by David its entire contents indicates; and that it was ascribed to him by the early Church is evident from Acts iv. 25. Whether or not the occasion of it may be found in the history recorded in 2 Sam. x., where many multitudes rebelled against David and were defeated by him, it is indisputably evident that the scope of the Psalm is far above and beyond that occasion or anything like it. The Psalm is *prophetic*, and "the King of Zion" is none other than the King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus the Christ. To none other will the terms of the Psalm apply. The Jews anciently regarded it as a Messianic Psalm, and abandoned that view and referred it exclusively to David, only because they saw that it pointed irresistibly to Jesus as the Messiah. See it quoted, in reference to Christ, in Acts iv. 25; xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5; v. 5, and alluded to in Matt. xxvi. 63; John i. 41, 49; vi. 69; Rom. i. 4; Rev. ii. 27; xii. 5; xix. 15. To David's house was the divine promise given of a perpetual reign. See 2 Sam.

vii. 16, 17; 1 Chron. xvii. 11-15; Ps. lxxxix. 20-29. Now, except as Jesus is the "Son of David," David's house has long since entirely passed away from the lists of royalty. But that the promises to him refer finally to Christ's kingdom is evident from the offer of "the sure mercies of David" in "an everlasting covenant" to every one who will hear and accept. Isa. lv. 3, compared with Acts xiii. 34. Christians are the willing subjects of "great David's greater Son," and his kingdom is increasing and never will end. This Psalm is divided into four parts of three verses each. The subjects of these respective parts will be found in the topics below. The whole is highly dramatic, and each part presents a new character as speaking. The scene is now on earth, and now again in heaven. The characters are now human, and again divine. The effect of the whole is unique and powerful, leading men to bow submissively to the sovereign power.

Nations Rebellious.

Verses 1-3. The scene here is on earth and opens with a representation of rebellious nations. WHY! An expression of astonishment and indignation at the scene. THE HEATHEN, or *the nations*, to which in the next clause PEOPLE, or rather *peoples*, corresponds. These words represent men in masses, mankind in its various races and aggregations. RAGE. Tumultuously assemble. It refers to the outward agitation expressive of the internal feeling, the surging and ominous roar of angry masses, comparable to the roar of the sea. Along with this they IMAGINE, or rather meditate, devise, plan. To their purpose expression is given in verse 3; but the Psalmist calls it A VAIN THING, something hopelessly impossible. These masses, moreover, are not unorganized or without leadership. For THE KINGS OF THE EARTH SET THEMSELVES in determined, defiant position at their head, and THE RULERS TAKE COUNSEL, consult, TOGETHER. The opposition is represented to be as formidable as men could make it. The object of their rebellious opposition is THE LORD, Jehovah, and HIS ANOINTED.

From the Hebrew word here used comes the name "Messiah," of which the Greek is "Christ," and the English "Anointed." Anointing by pouring on the head was an ancient form of consecration to the offices of prophet, priest and king, and denoted the person's being endued with the gifts and graces of the Spirit. This evidently refers to some particular individual, referred to again by the same term in Dan. ix. 25, 26, and under that title looked forward to by the Jews and others as the coming deliverer. See John i. 41; iv. 25. Jehovah further on calls this same person "my King" and "my Son." These two are equally the object of rebellious opposition on the part of the nations who say, **LET US BREAK THEIR BANDS ASUNDER AND CAST AWAY THEIR CORDS FROM US**, vainly supposing they could easily succeed in such attempt. "Bands" and "cords" figuratively represent all restraints which the Lord and his Anointed might impose upon them, the breaking and casting away of which would indicate successful resistance to their government.

Now the poet-seer, inspired by the divine Spirit, looks on this attempt aghast with amazement. It is a rebellion against infinite wisdom, infinite love and infinite power! How foolish! How impotent! Such is the imagination of man's depraved heart; such is sin! Unreasonable and hopeless. Observe that it is against "the Lord and his Anointed" that the rebellion is; and compare with this Jesus' word (John v. 23), "He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him;" and John's statement against men's vain imaginings, arising already in his day, concerning Jesus, "He is anti-christ that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." (1 John ii. 22-23.) That Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Romans and the Jews, in their treatment of Jesus, exemplify this part of the lesson, is true; but this is only one illustration thereof. There are many others. Indeed it sets forth the condition of this present evil world in its rebellion against God; and that the nations should thus oppose their Lord and Saviour, and authorities re-

sist the great Author of all authority, shows how the foundations of the earth are out of course, and how deep is the fall.

The next scene exhibits

The Sovereign Trarquil.

Verses 4-6. **HE THAT SITTETH IN THE HEAVENS.** Here we are carried above the lower, disturbed and disturbing, air into the calm, pure ether, where appears **THE LORD**, the *sovereign* of this and all worlds, who "hath set his throne in the heavens," "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," who sees not only all things that are done, but looks into all hearts and reads men's thoughts. He is undisturbed by even so formidable a rebellion. He **LAUGHS**, **HAS THEM IN DERISION** (for we may render these verbs by the present tense), contemns their raging and imaginings, knowing how vain a thing the attempt is. Luther, in the same bold style of language used here, says, "Who thought, when Christ suffered and the Jews triumphed, that God was laughing all the time?" He says again, "Therefore must we fix and stay our hearts, in all our straits, assaults, tribulations and difficulties, upon him who sitteth in the heavens: for then it will come to pass that the adversity, vexation, and trials of this world can not only be taken lightly, but can even be smiled at." They raged; the sovereign laughed. **THEN.** Afterwards. **SHALL HE SPEAK UNTO THEM** words which shall vex, agitate, terrify them. For they will be an expression of **WRATH**, **SORE DISPLEASURE**. God can laugh at the helplessness and hopelessness of all that rebellious man can do, but he cannot contemplate the moral character of his spirit and acts without righteous indignation. God must hate and oppose sin. As they expressed themselves, now the sovereign expresses himself, and says, **YET**, notwithstanding all your rage, **HAVE I** (the I is here emphatic), **SET MY KING** (to rule for me) **UPON MY HOLY HILL OF ZION.** The hill Zion was the original citadel of Jerusalem, its highest part, where David established the royal palace, and where the sanctuary with the ark was placed before the building of the temple on **Mt. Moriah**, opposite Zion.

It represented the theocracy. From Zion God's Anointed rules and will rule, till all things are put under him. For, at Jerusalem the cross was lifted up, whence the King "will draw all nations" unto him; and the heralding of his kingdom to all nations had its "beginning at Jerusalem." Of course in this second scene, and in the next, the divine being is spoken of as if he were human. How else could human beings understand either the thought or the language?

The Anointed's Declaration.

Verses 7-9. I. Here the Anointed, the Messiah, is introduced as speaking. **WILL DECLARE.** He is the Word, the expression of God. **THE DECREE.** The appointment, law, constitution, in virtue of which I am King. **THE LORD (Jehovah) HATH SAID** (in time past) **UNTO ME** (therefore existing in time past, and in person distinct from Jehovah), **THOU ART MY SON; THIS DAY (to-day) HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE,** (am I thy Father). The time of the issue of this decree is not marked, except as *past*. A long time after the composition of this Psalm, at the baptism of Jesus, and at his transfiguration, a voice from heaven said of him, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." From these and other references to this Psalm in the New Testament, it is evident that the subject of this Psalm is Jesus, and that he is the Messiah. He is called "the only begotten Son" (John i. 14, 18; iii. 16), and "the first begotten" (Heb. i. 6; Rev. i. 5). The devils knew him and called him, "Christ, the Son of God." Moreover, that he was such was declared with power by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. i. 4). We are not to understand from the connection of this passage with the resurrection in the New Testament, that *then he began to be* the Son of God. There is something here that utterly passes our comprehension or even conception; but the whole gist of Scriptures leads us to believe in the eternal preëxistence of the Son, who in time became "manifest in the flesh" for our salvation. **ASK OF ME.** Even in the case of so great a personage, the law, "Ask and ye shall receive," holds good.

This verse is part of the "decree." **THE HEATHEN**—not Israel only. The "King of Zion" is destined to become king of nations, even to the **UTTERMOST, most distant, PARTS OF THE EARTH.** "Crown him Lord of all!" This is his destiny, and he need not seek such empire by false means (Matt. iv. 8, 9), for they are already his for the asking. His **INHERITANCE** as Jehovah's Son; his **POSSESSION**, to hold fast, and never again to fall away from their rightful sovereignty.

THOU SHALT BREAK THEM, their rebellion, causing them to submit, **WITH A ROD OF IRON.** A sceptre of strength and power. **THOU SHALT DASH THEM IN PIECES AS A POTTER'S VESSEL** is shattered. Thus easily and irremediably. Such will be the result of persistent opposition to God's rule. The kingdom of God is to overcome all kingdoms, as the stone cut out of the mountain crushed Nebuchadnezzar's image. The all-conquering, terrible side of the Divine government is here set forth; and there is very much of this in the Bible, for a warning to obstinate sinners. "O God," says the Psalmist, "thou art terrible out of thy holy places." And again, "He is terrible to the kings of the earth." And the prophets speak of "the great and terrible day of the Lord" which is to come. Paul represents the Lord Jesus as coming "in flaming fire, taking vengeance." Heb. xii. 29 says, "Our God is a consuming fire." Whatever will not bend to Christ must break.

The Psalmist's Warning.

Verses 10-12. This part is the moral, the application, of the whole. The Psalmist is the speaker, and addressing the head men, **KINGS and JUDGES**, his words are meant and suited for all. **NOW THEREFORE.** In view of the scenes presented, and of what has been said, **BE WISE, BE INSTRUCTED.** He must be a great fool among men who is past being instructed. All are called to hear and heed God's messengers, speaking by his Spirit. **SERVE** the higher King and Judge of all the earth, **JEHOVAH:** and, whilst return from your rebellion to your rightful fealty should make you **REJOICE**, yet let it be **WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING**, proper reverential awe,

abashed before the Lord. Kiss THE SON. Acknowledge the Messiah. Kissing was an ancient mode of doing homage, and it is sometimes so still. LEST HE BE ANGRY. "Who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?" (Ps. lxxvi. 7.) "The wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. vi. 16) must be a dreadful thing. AND YE PERISH FROM THE WAY. Lose the way, or perish by the way. Comp. Ps. i. 6. The Son has said, "I am the way," and "No man cometh unto the Father but by me!" WHEN HIS WRATH IS KINDLED BUT A LITTLE. Alexander renders this, *For his wrath will soon burn, or be kindled.* There is no telling when he may call men to account. There is a day of mercy, and a day of wrath;

even as God must be just as well as good. There is a city of refuge; but woe to him who is not in it when the avenger cometh! BLESSED. This sweet word occurs again, closing the Psalm that speaks of such irresistible power. Blessed are ALL THEY THAT PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM. This is a word of hope to every person of all "the nations." "God is a refuge for us." If we will run into this tower, we shall surely be safe. With God for us we are blessed; with him against us, we are lost. "Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded" (1 Pet. ii. 6).

Infant Department.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS.

BY PROF. E. S. BREIDENBAUGH, A. M.

The Reading of God's Law.

Feb. 2, 1879.

Nehemiah viii. 1-8.

In our last four lessons we have been having accounts of the return of the Jews from Babylon, of their building of the temple and the building of the walls about Jerusalem. We have also learned how the neighboring people tried to stop the work, but God was the Helper. He saw that the work was done. So the good man Nehemiah wrote the words (vi. 15-16) "So the wall was finished, * * * and it came to pass that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was wrought (done by the aid) of our God."

Nehemiah now was told by God (vii. 5) to gather all the people together and to see how many there were, just as the pastor can tell how many families belong to the church, and how many children are in each family. So Sunday-school teachers can tell who

belong to the school and whether each one is trying to do right, to work for God.

Why do we come to-day to Sunday-school? To learn of God. To hear from God's word. To learn our duty. To be taught what God wishes us to do. So after Nehemiah had numbered all the people, they were all gathered together to hear what God had said was their duty; old and young came, fathers and mothers and children. No room was large enough to hold so many people and so they were gathered in that street of the city that led down to the place where there was the largest amount of water. A high place like a pulpit was built up, and then Ezra—that very good and noble man of whom our former lessons told us—stood in this pulpit, and opened the book of the law. This book is that part of the Bible which Moses wrote as God told him. This part of the Bible told the Jews what it was that God wished them to do. Before reading, Ezra stood up, opened his book and the people all stood up and Ezra prayed to God—we are not told what his very words were—but he praised God for having told them of their duty, he

thanked God for their temple and their Bible, and all the people said, "Amen, Amen," and worshiped God. We prayed to-day and thanked God for our Bible and our church and our Sabbath-school, and all we have;—we said Amen—that means "So be it"—do we mean all we say? After thus praying Ezra stood and read, and as all the people could not hear him—other men whose names are given (v. 7) read to those who stood far away from Ezra.

Those who were reading explained the meaning of the words of God just as ministers and Sunday-school teachers try to do. Now the reading began as soon as the morning had come, and was not done before noon, that is, the reading lasted six hours. You think that was long; these people did not think so, they were glad to hear God's Holy Book read, and listened with their ears open to hear and understand every word. They did not sit down, nor lounge, but stood up all the time. So, dear children, when we hear God's words to us in the Bible read, we should listen—not looking all around and thinking of something else, but trying to understand so that we may know what God wishes us to do, how to live and love. Every word should be listened to. God will help us to understand what is difficult. We always can understand enough to keep from doing wrong. Remember to

BE ATTENTIVE

INTEREST yourself.

BELIEVE the Bible.

LEARN to understand it.

EARNESTLY DO its teaching.

(Place on the board the above or the words in capitals and enlarge on each point.)

For Golden Text we have the teachings on the value of the Bible, as given in the Psalms, cxix. 130: *The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*

The Keeping of the Sabbath.

Feb. 9.

Nehemiah xiii. 15-22.

In review, ask where were the people gathered? Why? Where was Ezra? What did he do? What did the people? Who helped Ezra? How did the people listen? How should we listen to the

Word of God? Repeat the Golden Text. Why is this true?

We have found Nehemiah to be a man very anxious that all the people should know the law of God. We find him very anxious, also, that these people should not only know what God would have them do but also should do what they know to be their duty. For we may know the whole Bible well enough to repeat much of it, or all of it, and may understand much of it, but it is of no value to our souls unless we try to obey it.

Nehemiah tried to teach this to the people. Among the many things God has told us are the Ten Commandments. Now the Jews had heard these read; as we learned last Lord's day. Among these Commandments is one about the Sabbath. (Have the children repeat it, and ask them a few questions as to its meaning. It may be well not to speak yourself of the meaning till at the close of the lesson.)

Nehemiah found that a number of the people violated, disobeyed, this Commandment. Some were making wine out of the rich, ripe grapes that grew on the hillsides. Some were cutting the wheat and gathering it in to prepare the grain for flour. Others had their animals about to carry burdens. Others brought wine, grapes and figs, and fish, and all sorts of things into the city to sell on God's holy day.

Those in the city who should have put a stop to such things, not only allowed them to go on, but no doubt bought and used these fruits and foods that were peddled about.

Nehemiah talked to the people of the city (vs. 17, 18). He said, You know how God punished our fathers for forgetting to remember the Sabbath and to keep it holy. Are you not afraid to do these things? This does not seem to have been enough. There were a number of people, it seems, who heard God's Word but forgot to do it. So Nehemiah (vs. 19, 20) sent his servants—soldiers—to shut the gates, in the wall of the city, on the evening before the Sabbath, and would not allow any one who was bringing things for sale to come within the city. These men stopped for a couple of times out-

side of the city. They were very angry, I suppose, that they should not be allowed to come into the city. Nehemiah did yet more. He told these people (v. 21) that they must keep away altogether on the Lord's day; they must cease working on this day, or he would punish them. This put a stop to disobeying in this way the Fourth Commandment.

We have a law which prevents persons from selling or buying on the Sabbath. But persons may do other things that are wrong on the Sabbath.

To keep the Lord's day properly we must not do any work which is unnecessary. Nor must we engage in such things as merely amuse us; playing and romping all the day. Very little children cannot, nor should they, be kept all day from play. But we are most of us old enough to spend most if not all of the day in trying to learn of God—of the love of Jesus, of the blessed Bible.

We must do, whatever we do, for the reason that God desires it of us. This should be our rule every day.

After Nehemiah had done these things he prayed God, and said, "Remember me, O, God, in this; for here I have tried to do my duty, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy." We are not saved except in the mercy of God—our works are nothing. Golden Text, "*Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.*" (Ex. xx. 8.)

The Right Way.

Feb. 16.

Psalm i. 1-6.

Review. What commandment did the Jews disobey? Repeat it. What did the people do? What did Nehemiah say? What do? What threaten? How can we keep the Sabbath day? Why call it the Lord's day?

We tell persons, be careful that you walk straight—meaning, be careful to do what is right—or we say of one boy, he is going the right way, of another, he is on the wrong road, meaning that the conduct of the one boy is right and proper and will be pleasing to God—that the other boy is wrong and if he does not soon turn back he will find himself one of Satan's own servants.

Now, boys and girls, our lesson to-day is about the right way or the way of the righteous.

We have a proverb about birds; we will write it on the board and leave three words out:

BIRDS OF — — — FLOCK — — —.

Have the children supply the missing words, A FEATHER and TOGETHER. We never see a flock in part blackbirds, part wrens, part orioles, part crows, part robins, part swallows—each kind keeps in a flock. True, they build nests near each other, but they keep separate.

Let us see what the first Psalm, which is our lesson to-day, says about persons wishing to do right, being found in the company of bad persons. The first word is *Blessed*. What does that mean? (Encourage replies and use them in explaining and illustrating the meaning of the word. I would be much pleased if teachers would inform me of the answers they may receive.) By *blessed* we understand here that a person is in a "happy and very desirable condition," that he has the favor of God, and knows in his heart that he is doing what God asks him to do.

Who is in this happy condition? The first and second verses tell us. In the first verse we find that we must keep away from three kinds of people. Commit these verses.

First, We must not take the advice of, nor do as those do, who think they know what is right and proper without asking God. We must not walk in the way such go. God must be our adviser.

Second, We must not seek the company of persons who disobey God, who love to do wrong. We must not stand around and put ourselves where we can meet such as are sinners.

Third, We must not sit down and keep the company of such as speak against God, and scorn and laugh at the Bible. Must we have nothing to do with such persons? Absolutely nothing if we can help it, except to lead them away from their wicked path. A few illustrations will explain each point—I cannot here detail them—*e. g.*, Walk not with the boy as he goes in disobedience to fish, bathe, play ball, or the girl who goes to play, or swing, or nurse her dolls

when mother has something else for you to do ; stand not in the way of the truant, or thief, or boy who ridicules old age ; do not keep the company of the sorcerer, the Sabbath-breaker, the boy who drinks.

The second verse tells us what the man, or boy, or girl who is blessed does. Loves the Word of God, enjoys obeying it, and thinks of God and Jesus and his love—all the time—when at work, at play, when he rises, and when he goes to bed, feels like thanking, and does thank God for his care and prays for his constant love.

Illustrate verse 3 by a tree in a dry, hot season, up on the hill away from water, seared leaves, dry, withered-like-dead, compared with the fresh, bright-colored one along the stream.

Verse 4. Have a handful of wheat heads. Show how worthless for food is the chaff ; show it is blown away. We do not cherish it. So God does not preserve in heaven those who are ungodly, who have no care for his laws.

Verse 5. Ungodly cannot stand in heaven in the gathering of God's people.

Verse 6. The way of the ungodly leads to everlasting death.

Golden Text: Prov. iv. 18. The further we go in serving God the more easy it becomes.

Jesus, the King in Zion.

Feb. 23.

Psalm ii: 1-12.

Review. What do we mean by a boy being on the wrong road? of another going in the right way? How do birds flock together? What does *blessed* mean? Who is blessed? Repeat first and second verses. What three kinds of people must we keep away from? Why? What is the difference between a tree on the hill and one along the stream in the dry and hot summer? Difference between the chaff and the wheat? Where shall the wicked no stand? Repeat the Golden Text.

A great part of the Old Testament speaks of Jesus. The second of the Psalms is our lesson to-day. The word Psalm means praise—so the Psalms are songs of praises to God in one way or another—for love, for care, or asking for pardon, for blessing.

This Psalm praises Jesus as King. The King appointed by God as the Ruler of the whole world. We will to-day ask how is Jesus a King? How is he our King? Yours and mine?

A king governs men, makes laws, punishes those who disobey, and praises and rewards and helps those who try to obey.

Jesus does all these things. Governs the soul—the Bible is the Law Book—punishes sinners and blesses, makes happy those who obey him, as we learned last Sabbath.

Jesus is a good, kind, loving King ; never asks us to do what is impossible. We may think it is impossible, but Jesus helping, as he ever will do, all is possible.

Jesus cares for us as no one on earth can. He sees us always, knows exactly what we need and is ready to help us. Our King is full of concern for us.

Suppose, children, you tell me how he cares, how he has shown his concern, his love for us?

(Utilize as you best can the varied answers of the children, then lead their thoughts to the great love manifestation of Jesus which ended in his crucifixion and resurrection and ascension. Please, also, confer a favor by informing me as to answers you may receive to these questions, no matter how trivial they may seem.)

The Jesus who showed his love for men by coming to earth to die for sinners, for us, that he might save us—that earthly kings could not have done. He was cruelly treated by those who should have loved him. Jesus is the King of those who crucified him. What will Jesus do with them and such as now do not care for him and disobey him? This Psalm says he will dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. You know how easily a crock, a cup, or any earthen dish is broken. So those who will not obey the King Jesus will find no help. They may say, Come let us put away this King, we will have nothing to do with him. When the judgment comes Jesus, as King, will cast them from, will destroy all their hopes in hell as easily as one of us can destroy an earthen vessel.

Such as disobey this King, who is

full of love to all and ready to help all who try to serve him, are very foolish; since for such as are disobedient this King holds ready suffering and severe punishment.

Our Golden Text tells us what Peter said to the Jews about Jesus being King and Lord. Acts ii. 36: "*God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*"

Gleanings from the Great Field.

NEWS AND NOTES.

BY REV. S. B. BARNITZ.

MISSION CHAPEL.—Dr. John Hall's church in New York, has bought for its East side Mission the Chapel of the Bread of Life, on Fourteenth street, between First Avenue and Avenue A. The price paid was \$27,000. The Chapel was owned by St. George's church, by whom it was built, some years ago, at an expense of \$100,000.

HOLD ON TO SOUND DOCTRINE.—The specious heresy, so strongly maintained by so many of the foreign-born who have sought an asylum upon our continent, that the Sabbath should be exclusively a day of pleasure, is already bearing an abundant crop of evil fruit. The wholesome restraints of religion being cast away, the pleasure-seekers plunge readily into the gulf of every degrading vice.—*Our Bible Teacher.*

LIBERAL BEQUESTS.—The American Sunday-school Union has received \$100,000 as a legacy from the late Miss Mary B. Danser, of New York; and the late Myron Phelps, of Lewistown, Ill., who was for many years an earnest friend and liberal contributor to the missionary work of the same society, has left it a legacy of \$5000, besides making a generous provision for his own local church school.—*S. S. World.*

AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION.—Some rumors have made their way into print affecting the financial management of the American Sunday-school Union. In reply to these, the Finance Committee, among whom is George H. Stuart, state that they have made a very careful investigation, and, with the exception of some immaterial errors in the Publishing Department, declare that it is in all respects well conducted, and that it deserves as ever the confidence, sympathy, and support that it always has received. Where a Sunday-school was planted by one of the missionaries of the society just mentioned, the superintendent noted the change it effected in the community in these words: "All we wanted before was corn-dodgers and pork; now we hunger for Bibles and singing-books."

CHAMBERSBURG, PA.—The programme for the First Lutheran Sunday-school, Christmas night, was a carefully prepared one, both as to Scripture selections and music. The celebra-

tion is said to have been one of the school's most interesting and most profitable entertainments. It is refreshing to find in all the reports sent us an entire absence of that which is silly and unbecoming, and which "smacks" of buffoonery. We trust the day for Sunday-school theatricals in honor (?) of the Saviour's birth has forever passed. Certainly the Chambersburg programme shows nothing of it.

TRINITY LUTHERAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL, GERMANTOWN, PA.—This school held a delightful Christmas service according to the following instructive programme:

1. Processional Hymn, "Come ye Lowly, Come ye Lowly."
2. Opening Sentence.
3. Gloria Patri.
4. Prayer.
5. Hymn, "Hark! A Burst of Heavenly Music."
6. Prophecies concerning Jesus.
7. Hymn, "Ring Out the Bells of Christmas."
8. First Scripture Lesson [Luke ii. 1-14].
9. Hymn, "In the Lowly Manger Lying."
10. Second Scripture Lesson.
11. Hymn, "Jesus is my Shepherd." By the Infant School.
12. Address, Rev. Richard Newton, D. D.
13. Hymn, "A Merry Christmas."
14. Distribution of Gifts.
15. Lord's Prayer.

Benediction.

This school is in a very flourishing condition. The Superintendent, Mr. Th. Smith, is ever on the alert to interest and impress the scholars with the truth. The infant department, under Mrs. Albert, is a place of delight to visit. The school lives not to itself alone, but extends a helping hand to other fields and other benevolent work. Our prayer is that pastor, officers, teachers and scholars may enjoy a year of still greater prosperity during 1879. B.

ST. MATTHEW'S CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION.—The Sunday-school of St. Matthew's Lutheran church, of this city, held their Christmas anniversary services on Friday evening, the 27th of December. The audience chamber was tastefully decorated with evergreens festooned around the sides and across. Two beautiful trees, handsomely trimmed, graced the front of the pulpit platform. The exercises consisted of singing by the school, an address by the pastor, Rev. Dr. Baum, and scriptural recitations bearing directly upon the birth of

Christ, conducted by Master Robbie Stulb. The church was well filled with an appreciative audience, many of whom "gathered around the Christmas tree" after the benediction.—*Lutheran Observer*.

NEW YORK CITY.—It was quite a privilege we had of spending almost a week during December in the great metropolis. And never shall we forget the precious rest at No. 1 Rutherford Place, nor the Christian hospitality of Mr. L. H. Biglow and family, and other friends both old and new. Though unable to work, we were permitted to look in on several Sunday-schools in the neighborhood of our temporary abiding place, and regretted our inability on account of the great distance and lack of strength to enjoy a visit to our own pastors and Sunday-schools in Brooklyn. Sunday, December 15th, was very unpleasant as to weather. It was a dreary, gloomy day without, but within the Sunday-schools visited there was brightness and cheer. The Sunday-school of our friend Mr. Frank Ferris (14th Street Presbyterian) is a model of system and order. Christmas hymns and readings were being rehearsed and preparations made for an appropriate celebration of the anniversary of the Saviour's birth. Prominent in every class is the following:

WE BELIEVE

I. That every one should *help others to the gospel*.

II. That every one should *help as much as he can*.

III. That every one should find this work of helping others *very blessed and helpful to himself*.

So we put it down as our rule that we will

1. **GIVE** REGULARLY—An offering at least every Lord's Day.
2. **GIVE** CONSCIENTIOUSLY—According to our ability.
3. **GIVE** JOYFULLY—Because it proves a privilege and a blessing to us.

The report of each class and each scholar is made to the Secretary every Sunday, and the system is said to work admirably. Our next "look in" was at our own *St. James*. Here, too, we heard the note of preparation for making glad the hearts of the children at "happy Christmas-tide." Great changes have taken place in this Sunday-school on account of removals and deaths, but though some of the *workers* have died and others been called to new fields, the work still goes on. Amid many things to discourage and dishearten, this school holds up its head and keeps on its way sowing the seeds of truth. The Superintendent is Geo. P. Ockershausen.

Calvary Baptist Sunday school.—This school is also doing a most commendable work, gathering in the uncared for children from the thickly populated districts, and pointing them to the Lamb of God. The interest in hymns and scripture selections appropriate to the birth of Christ, was evident on every hand, and the scholars were being taught the precious lesson that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Notwithstanding the "*Jugs*," "*JUGGLER*,"

"*JUGGERNAUT*" of our friend Henson of the *Baptist Teacher* we found "the little brown money jugs" in almost every class. Some were beautifully decorated with decalcomania, others were painted in fancy colors, *all* were doing their work of teaching that "*Jugs can be used for good as well as evil purposes*." Leaving the "Calvary Baptist,"

The Church of "Pastor Wenner" next claimed a visit. In company with our good friend—Geo. P. Ockershausen—we wended our way to that part of New York where there is about one person to every twelve inches of space. The streets in the neighborhood of the Mission were crowded with pedestrians, the shops open and noise abounded. Entering the humble church, how changed the scene from that of the outside. *Within there was peace*, and calm and faithful worshipers—"God's Hidden Ones." What a mission field this young Bishop has! FORTY LANGUAGES are spoken in the neighborhood of his church, and in the tenement-houses for miles around. Our prayer is that the toil and teaching may tell largely upon the future of our church in *New York City*.

An Evening with Dr. Augustus Wedekind and family, was most pleasantly passed. About *eighty catechumens* have united with his class in the church of which he is about to take charge. His new field will be an immense one, and is rich in promise.

Wythe's Model of Jerusalem.—This beautiful model has recently been set up under canvas on 14th street, near 3d avenue, New York City. Every Sunday-school teacher and scholar, yea, every Christian visiting New York or living near the city ought to see it. It is in every way worthy of a visit. In making this note we have no interest to serve save that of Sunday-school and Christian work. There are *no paid notices* in these columns. *The Model of Jerusalem* is full of instruction, beauty and food for thought. The "surroundings" as set forth by Dr. Wythe are said to be very accurate and true to nature by those who have visited the sacred places.

THE PRESBYTERIAN AT WORK comes to us in new form and under new name. It is now "*The Westminster Teacher*" in same form as our *Augsburg*. It is beautifully printed, carefully and ably edited, has excellent blackboard illustrations, and in every way surpasses its predecessor and deserves the support of the whole Presbyterian Church.

REPORT OF NEW YORK SUNDAY-SCHOOL CONVENTION.—Through the kindness of Edward Danforth, State Secretary, we have received a copy of this document. It contains 151 pages of closely printed matter, with every valuable expression of the members composing the great gathering at Albany, in June last. It is well edited by Mr. Danforth, of Elmira, and well printed by our friend, Joel Munsell, of Albany. Price 55 cents per copy.

No person is so insignificant as to be sure his example can do no harm.—*Clarendon*.

MESSIAH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL, PHILADELPHIA. — "One Thousand Dollars" was the promise of this school towards finishing the church, and the money to be raised without in any way interfering with the regular contributions to missions, education, and orphans. Will they meet this \$1000 promise has been asked again and again, and they have responded, *we will!* Three strange "B's" happened to be present when a part of this promise was made good. The evening of the 19th of December was the time, and the occasion "*The Jug Breaking.*" Everybody was in good humor and anxious to see

"The Little Brown Jugs full of money"

opened, and the contents counted. Superintendent Boner conducted the exercises, which consisted of singing, prayer, addresses, and giving. Rev. Dr. Binm made a very happy address, teaching a number of lessons from the occasion itself, and congratulating the school upon its successful efforts. Rev. Prof. Baugher was the last speaker of the evening. He dwelt particularly upon the duty and privilege of "giving" as a part of worship, and was listened to with the closest attention, even to a late hour. The few weeks the "Jugs" were on duty, \$82.00 were gathered. *Success!* The 19th anniversary of this school was celebrated on the evening of January 2d. The New Year opens brightly for the Messiah Sunday-school of Philadelphia. Before its close may the top-stone be brought with shoutings of "*grace, grace unto it,*" and the feast of dedication be held with joy is the wish of the criticised "B."

JEWISH SUNDAY-SCHOOL MANUAL.—To the most of persons the announcement will sound a little odd that among the late publications is a Jewish *Sunday-school Manual*. Still, having adopted the Sunday-school idea, the manual is one of the results that naturally might be expected. It is prepared by Dr. DeSolla, and is divided into three parts. Part I. is taken up with Biblical history of the Jews, from the Babylonian captivity to the present time; Part II. is consumed with the interpretation of Mosaic laws; and Part III. is given to lessons on Palestine. We are not certain but what some of our normal workers will find it to their advantage to inquire for it at the nearest Jewish book-store.—*National Sunday-school Teacher.*

MISSION ITEMS.

NEBRASKA.—*Its Extent, Its Wants, and Its Prospects.* By Rev. J. C. Brodfuehrer.—New York, the Empire State, has 30,080,000 acres; Pennsylvania, the Keystone State, has 29,440,000; Ohio, the Mother of Presidents, has 25,576,960 acres, Nebraska has 78,084,480 acres! Nearly as large as these three grand States combined. Give us a few counties from fertile Kansas, or a little strip of metalliferous Colorado, and Nebraska equals New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Says Bancroft, in his recent volume, "The Footprints of Time," "The greater portion of the country consists of a high, rolling prairie. The soil in the eastern part of the State is a rich loam, finely pulverized, and admirably adapted to cultivation. The centre of the State is strictly pastoral; the western section has a fair soil, but is destitute of timber, and insufficiently supplied with water. Wheat, corn, oats, and other cereals, and vegetables and fruits, yield largely.

"The educational advantages are good. The common school system, modeled on that of Ohio, is well supplied with funds, embracing one-sixteenth of the public lands, or 2,500,000 acres. To endow a State Agricultural College 90,000 acres were given, and to the State University 46,081 acres."

Its want, as far as our Zion is concerned, is a number of Calebs and Joshuas, to come out and possess the land in the name of the Lord. For every Muhlenberg in Pennsylvania, in the past century, we need three learned, sensible and persevering men, because the territory is thrice as large. This want supplied, Nebraska will surely become the Western Pennsylvania of Lutheranism. The Nebraska Synod has doubled its membership in less than five years—there are about 70 Lutheran ministers in the State, representing the different doctrinal confessions. Rev. F. W. Scheibel is our self-denying missionary among the Russo-Germans in Franklin, Nebraska.

MISSIONS.—*Mr. Editor:* By a late letter from a missionary friend in Japan, I learn that the exact figures in reference to mission work in that island empire are as follows:

Missionaries (men and women).....	106
Organized Churches.....	44
Churches self-supporting.....	12
Church members.....	1,617
Theological Schools.....	3
" Students.....	173
Sunday-schools.....	52
Sunday-school scholars.....	1,856
Ordained native preachers.....	9
Assistant " ".....	9
Hospitals and Dispensaries.....	9
Patients treated last year.....	17,932
Total contributions of the native Christians in one year for all purposes..	\$3,552 11

When we remember that actual mission work in Japan is scarcely more than ten years old, and that five years ago when I first went to Tokio (Yedo), the capital, there was not a single native organization in that city of a million of people, there is reason to think the progress most hopeful. The Lutheran church ought by all means to have a representative in Japan, to help in laying the foundations of the greatest mission work ever attempted in the history of Christianity. Let the schools increase their contributions, and the teachers, and superintendents, and pastors keep the fact before the church, and we may do what we have long since resolved and re-resolved to do. I am glad to see the *Mission* corner in the *Augsburg Teacher*.
W. E. PARSONS.

1st Quarter.

AUGSBURG LESSON LEAF. February 2, 1879.

Lesson V.

International Bible Lessons.

NEH. viii. 1-8.

THE READING OF THE LAW.

1. And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

2. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3. And he read therein before the street that *was* before the water gate, from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand: and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the law.

4. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose: and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Annaiah, and Urijah,

and Hilikiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

5. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people: (for he was above all the people;) and, when he opened it, all the people stood up:

6. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God: And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

7. Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people *stood* in their place.

8. So they read in the book, in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

EXPLANATORY QUESTIONS.

A MASS MEETING.

1. What gathering is here spoken of? By whom prompted? Where held?
2. To whom did they appeal? Who was he?
3. When did Ezra first return to Jerusalem? What had he done there?
4. What did the mass meeting now ask him to do?
5. How did Ezra respond to their request? Who were there to hear?
6. What disposition was hereby indicated by the people?
7. Why should all desire to hear the word of God? See "Golden Text."

THE PROCEEDINGS.

8. Having brought the roll of the law, what did Ezra do?
9. How long did this last? What is said of the people's attention?
10. What position did the reader take? Why there? Verse 5.
11. What is said of his attendants? Who, probably, were they?

12. When Ezra opened the roll before them, what did all the people do? Why?
13. What devotional acts were then engaged in?
14. How did the people respond? In connection with what gesture? Explain.
15. What further devotional postures did the people assume?
16. Who assisted in the instruction of the people?
17. Of what in Jehoshaphat's time does all this remind you? 2 Chron. xvii. 7-9.
18. Of what in Josiah's time? 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14-21, 29-32.
19. How are the proceedings of this mass meeting summed up in verse 8?
20. What three characteristics of good preaching are here contained?
21. What ought to be the chief thing in religious meetings?
22. How is faith wrought, according to Rom. x. 17?
23. What is God's plan for saving men? 1 Cor. i. 21.
24. Who are to do this preaching? How are the heathen to learn God's word?

CENTRAL TEXT.—Verses 1-3 and 8. Commit to memory.

LESSON TAUGHT.—The law of the Lord is the law of life, and should be heard and understood by all.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." Ps. cxix. 130.

SCRIPTURE READINGS.

M. Neh. vii.
T. " viii.
W. " ix.
TH. 2 Chron. xvii. 1-9.
F. " xxxiv. 14-32.
SAT. Ps. cxix. 1-16. [-24].
S. Rom. x. 10-21; 1 Cor. i. 18

BRIEF NOTES.—The exact position of "the water gate" is not certainly known. "As one man" indicates their unanimity. Notice that the proposition to hear the law came from the people. "Ezra the Scribe," called also "Ezra the Priest," had gone to Jerusalem twelve years before, commissioned by Artaxerxes to execute the law of God in Judea, teach it to the people and beautify the temple.

He instituted many reforms. He and Nehemiah co-operated in raising up the affairs of the Jews. "The seventh month" was a festival month, the civil year opening with it in conjunction with the feast of trumpets, and the feast of tabernacles beginning on the 15th. Those who stood on each side of Ezra are supposed to have been priests. "All the people stood up" as a mark of reverence for God's word. So they do still among the Germans, when the Gospel is read. "Blessed the Lord"—made a prayer of thanksgiving. Responses, such as "Amen, Amen," appear frequently in the sacred history. "Lifting up their hands"—an attitude expressive of their expectation being from God and their desires toward him. The bowing with their faces to the ground indicated awe and submission. Those who aided in instructing the people were Levites. This whole scene is more nearly like modern preaching than anything we have yet had in the sacred history.

1st Quarter.

AUGSBURG LESSON LEAF. February 9, 1879.

Lesson VI.

International Bible Lessons.

NEH. xiii. 15-22.

THE KEEPING OF THE SABBATH.

15. ¶ In those days saw I in Judah *some* treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day; and I testified *against them* in the day wherein they sold victuals.

16. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

17. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing *is* this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?

18. Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel, by profaning the sabbath.

19. And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jeru-

salem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath; and *some* of my servants set I at the gates, *that* there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.

20. So the merchants, and sellers of all kind of ware, lodged without Jerusalem once or twice.

21. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do *so* again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no *more* on the sabbath.

22. And I commanded the Levites, that they should cleanse themselves, and *that* they should come *and* keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, *concerning* this also, and spare me, according to the greatness of thy mercy.

EXPLANATORY QUESTIONS.

SABBATH-BREAKING REPROVED.

1. What did Nehemiah see some of his returned Jewish brethren doing on the Sabbath day?
2. Was this right or wrong? Why? Did they know it? How?
3. What did Nehemiah do to these Sabbath-breakers? Meaning of "testified against?"
4. What is our neighborly duty toward our brethren whom we see breaking God's commandments? Levit. xix. 17.
5. Who else were profaning the Sabbath in Jerusalem? How?
6. What covenant had the Jews recently made about this? x. 31.
7. Was buying as bad as selling wares on the Sabbath? How so?
8. Who appear to have encouraged the traffic?
9. What did Nehemiah do and say to them?
10. What did he say had come upon them and Jerusalem by such disregard of God's commandments on the part of their fathers?
11. What had Jeremiah said to their fathers? Jer. xvii. 19-27. Compare Is. lviii 13, 14; Ez. xxii; 8.
12. What did he say would be the consequence of their Sabbath-breaking?

SABBATH-BREAKING RESTRAINED.

13. What did Nehemiah do besides reproving the Sabbath-breakers?
14. What did the latter do then? Why lodge there?
15. What did Nehemiah do then? With what did he threaten them?
16. What virtues of a good ruler did Nehemiah in this display?
17. What effect had his measures?
18. What permanent provision did he make to preserve the sanctity of the day?
19. Explain Nehemiah's prayer in verse 22?
20. What is the meaning of the word "Sabbath?"
21. When was the Sabbath instituted? Gen. ii. 2, 3; Ex. xx. 8-11.
22. For what was the Sabbath made? Mark ii. 27.
23. How long then is it to last? Of what is it a type? Heb. ix. 9.
24. What day is called "The Christian Sabbath?" How does it differ from the Jews' Sabbath? How should we keep it?

CENTRAL TEXT.—Verse 18.
Commit to memory.

LESSON TAUGHT.—The keeping of God's Commandments.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Ex. xx. 8.

SCRIPTURE READINGS.

M. Neh. xiii. 15-22. [19-27.
T. Is. lviii. 13, 14; Jer. xvii.
W. Num. xv. 32-36.
Th. Matt. xii. 1-14.
F. John ix. 13-16.
SAT. Heb. iv. 1-16.
S. Psalm xcii.

BRIEF NOTES.—Nehemiah observed business and trafficking going on in Judah and Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, contrary to the commandment, and that by both his countrymen and "men of Tyre" living there. The "nobles," that is the higher classes, encouraged this by buying, and thereby encouraged and participated in the wrong. Like the good ruler that he was, Nehemiah reproved them, and,

when words did no good, proceeded to acts which should compel obedience. He shut the gates, and had them watched, to prevent wares from being carried in on the Sabbath. So the traffickers set up their wares outside the gates, hoping for customers to come out. This, too, Nehemiah would not tolerate, and took effective measures to prevent it. Laws are of no account unless enforced; and there must be somebody to enforce them. "Began to be dark before the Sabbath;" the Jewish day began after sunset, in the evening. "Cleanse themselves," as for the Lord's service. "Remember me," etc. (verse 22)—not words of self-glorification, but of trust in God, who has promised to honor them that honor him. "Sabbath" means *rest*, and the Sabbath is one of the earliest institutions established by God; it was "made for man," and is a type of heaven. In the Christian church the first day of the week is kept as the rest day, and called by some "the Christian Sabbath." The New Testament calls it "the Lord's day," and people ordinarily call it "Sunday." It should be observed as a day of joyful rest from worldly toil, and of study of God's word and works, and of worship of him. It should not be observed in a Jewish, *legal* spirit.

1st Quarter.

AUGSBURG LESSON LEAF. February 16, 1879.

Lesson VII.

International Bible Lessons.

PSALM i. 1-6.

THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

1. Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful:
 2. But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.
 3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

4. The ungodly *are* not so; but *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
 5. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
 6. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

EXPLANATORY QUESTIONS.

HIS CHARACTER.

1. From what book is our lesson taken? What is a psalm?
2. Who wrote the Psalms? In what language?
3. What was this book called among the Hebrews, and why?
4. Who, probably, wrote this Psalm? What is it about?
5. What three things does the man here spoken of *not* do?
6. Who are "the ungodly?" "Sinners?" "The scornful?"
7. What relation to one another do you see in the three things mentioned?
8. In what is the man described said to delight? What is it "to delight?"
9. What is "the law of the Lord?" What further does he do in reference to this law?
10. What did God say to Joshua? Josh. i. 8. To Timothy? 1 Tim. iv. 15.

HIS BLESSEDNESS.

11. What is said in verse 1 of the man described? Meaning of "blessed?"
12. To what is he compared in verse 3?
13. In what three respects is the tree described? How do these represent a godly man's life?
14. What general statement about him, verse 3, last clause?
15. Who, then, is the happy man?

A CONTRAST.

16. Who are not so? To what are they compared? What comes of it?
17. When and where shall they not stand, or abide?
18. What judgment is here meant? How is it with the godly and the ungodly in this life? How will it be in the next?
19. What is said of "the way of the righteous?" Meaning of "knoweth?"
20. What is said of the way of the ungodly?
21. How are these two ways set forth in Matt. vii. 13, 14?
22. Which of these ways are you going? "Lesson Taught?" "Golden Text?"

CENTRAL TEXT.—Verse 6.
 Commit the whole Psalm to memory.

LESSON TAUGHT.—How to be happy.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. iv. 18.

SCRIPTURE READINGS.

M. Psalm i.
 T. Prov. iii. 1-26.
 W. Psalm xix.
 TH. Mal. iii. 14-18.
 F. Psalm lxxiii.
 SAT. Matt. v. 1-12; Phil. iv. 4.
 S. Psalm cxxviii.

BRIEF NOTES.—"Blessed"—or, How great the happiness of. "Walketh, standeth, sitteth"—mark a progression in character. Solomon says: "Avoid it; pass not by it; turn from it and pass away!" "Ungodly"—openly wicked. "Sinners"—those who regard not duty and God's requirements. "Scornful"—scorners, who sneer at religion and treat it with contempt. Corresponding to the verbs are the

nouns—"counsel, way, seat." "The law of the Lord"—God's word, the Bible; of which we have more than the Psalmist had. This is a "delight," not a burden. "Day and night"—always. "The rivers of water" here are artificial channels of irrigation, several of which might come about the tree. "His" is used for *its* in the Scriptures, the neuter possessive being later in origin than our English version. "The chaff," though side by side with the wheat and protecting it, is yet blown away at last. "In the judgment"—the time of testing and separation. Things that are commingled here will be separated hereafter. But there are even preliminary judgments in which such difference is made. "Knoweth"—acknowledgeth, approveth. See Matt. vii. 23; xxv. 12. "Shall perish"—its end shall be destruction. David is probably the author of this Psalm.

1st Quarter.

AUGSBURG LESSON LEAF. February 23, 1879.

Lesson VIII.

International Bible Lessons.

PSALM ii. 1-12.

THE KING OF ZION.

1. Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?
2. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take council together, against the LORD, and against his Anointed, *saying*,
3. Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.
4. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.
5. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.
6. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.
7. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath

said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

8. Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possessions.

9. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

10. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

12. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.

EXPLANATORY QUESTIONS.

NATIONS REBELLIOUS.

1. With what scene does this Psalm open?
2. Who are meant by "the heathen" and "the people" in verse 1?
3. Who are represented as leading them, in verse 2?
4. Against whom are they rebellious? Who is "the Lord"? Who is "his Anointed"?
5. What do the rebellious say? Who are referred to by "their"? Meaning of "bands" and "cords"?
6. What use and reference of these verses by the early church do we find Acts iv. 24-30?
7. To whom in general may these verses be applied?

THE SOVEREIGN TRANQUIL.

8. Who is meant, verse 4, by "He that sitteth in the heavens"? How does he regard the rebellious spirit of the nations? How can such terms as "laugh" and "derision" be applied to God?
9. What is God represented as doing, and how, in verse 5?
10. What does he proclaim to them? Meaning of this?
11. What is the general teaching of verses 3, 4 and 5? Compare "Lesson Taught."

THE ANOINTED'S DECLARATION.

12. Who speaks in verse 7? To declare what? Whose "decree"?
13. To whom was this decree made? What was it?
14. What direct references to this decree do we find in the New Testament? Acts iii. 33; Heb. i. 5, v. 5; Rev. ii. 27.
15. Those passages prove that this Psalm refers to whom as its subject?
16. What is this person called in this decree? What is promised him? What is said of his rule? What side of the divine government is here set forth? Compare Luke xix. 27.

THE PSALMIST'S WARNING.

17. Who speaks, at verse 10? To whom? What warning does he give?
18. What is meant by "Kiss the Son"? On what grounds is this warning given?
19. What is said in Heb. xii. 28, 29? What is set forth in Rev. vi. 15-17?
20. With what encouragement does this Psalm close? What earthly king ever made all his loyal subjects happy?
21. What king can and does do this? Are you his happy subject?

CENTRAL TEXT.—Verses 6-8.
Commit to memory.

LESSON TAUGHT.—The uselessness of resistance to God.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Acts ii. 36.

SCRIPTURE READINGS.

M.	Psalm ii.
T.	Acts iv. 23-33.
W.	Daniel vii. 9-27.
TH.	Heb. i. 1; ii. 8.
F.	Psalm xxiv.
SAT.	Rev. xix. 10-21.
S.	Rom. ix. 33; x. 21.

BRIEF NOTES.—This Psalm seems, like the first one, to have been written by David. See Acts iv. 25. It belongs to what are called "the Messianic Psalms," being a prophecy concerning the Messiah. It is divided into four parts, of three verses each. The topics on this leaf give the several subjects of these parts. The Psalm is very dramatic, and presents a new character in each part. The

parallelisms belonging to Hebrew verse are also very prominent, the same thing being in nearly every verse repeated in other and synonymous forms. "The heathen," or, rather *nations*, and "the people" (*peoples*), represent the same thing—compact masses of those who rebel against God's government. "Rage"—tumultuously assemble. "Imagine"—meditate. "A vain thing"—something hopeless, impossible. "Set themselves" to "take counsel together." "The Lord" (wherever printed in small capitals)—Jehovah. "Anointed"—the Hebrew of this is *Messiah*, and the Greek, *Christ*. "Bands" and "cords" represent the restraints of God's government. "Laugh" and "derision" are attributed to the Most High by a figure called anthropomorphism, that is, speaking of God as if he were a man. In verse 6, Jehovah speaks. "Yet"—notwithstanding your rebellious opposition. "My king"—to reign for me. This king, the Messiah, speaks in verse 7. "The Lord hath said"—an eternal decree. "Thou," etc.: Compare Matt. iii. 17, xvii. 5. Verse 8 shows the universal extent of this kingdom. Verse 9, its adequate power, enough to subdue rebellion, etc. So the New Testament speaks of Christ as "The lion of the tribe of Judah," and of "the wrath of the Lamb." "Kiss the Son"—recognize and submit to him. Kissing being an ancient mode of indicating homage. "When his wrath," etc. (verse 12), would better read, "For his wrath will soon burn." "Blessed" means *happy*.

HYMNS.

SELECTED FROM THE "BOOK OF WORSHIP," AND NUMBERED AS IN THAT BOOK.

- 48 (500). H. M.
 Lord of the worlds above,
 How pleasant and how fair
 The dwellings of thy love,
 Thine earthly temples are I
 To Thine abode
 My heart aspires,
 With warm desires
 To see my God.
 O happy souls that pray
 Where God appoints to hear I
 O happy men that pay
 Their constant service there I
 They praise Thee still;
 And happy they,
 Who love the way
 To Zion's hill.
 They go from strength to strength,
 Through this dark vale of tears,
 Till each arrives at length,
 Till each in heaven appears:
 O glorious seat,
 When God our King
 Shall thither bring
 Our willing feet!
- 57 (26). C. M.
 Lord, all I am is known to Thee;
 In vain my soul would try
 To shun Thy presence or to flee
 The notice of Thine eye.
 Thine all-surrounding sight surveys
 My rising and my rest,
 My public walks, my private ways,
 And secrets of my breast.
 My thoughts lie open to Thee, Lord,
 Before they're form'd within;
 And ere my lips pronounce the
 word,
 Thou know'st the sense I mean.
 O wondrous knowledge deep and
 high;
 Where can a creature hide?
 Within Thy circling arms I lie,
 Beset on ev'ry side.
 So let Thy grace surround me still,
 And like a bulwark prove,
 To guard my soul from every ill,
 Secured by sovereign love.
- 81 (81). C. M.
 How are Thy servants blest, O
 Lord!
 How sure is their defence!
 Eternal Wisdom is their guide,
 Their help Omnipotence.
 In midst of dangers, fears and deaths,
 Thy goodness I'll adore;
 And praise Thee for Thy mercies
 past,
 And humbly hope for more.
 My life, while Thou preserv'st my
 life,
 Thy sacrifice shall be;
 And oh! may death, when death
 shall come,
 Unite my soul to Thee.
- 111 (105). C. M.
 Hark, the glad sound, the Saviour
 comes,
 The Saviour promised long!
 Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne,
 And ev'ry voice a song.
 On Him the Spirit, largely pour'd,
 Exerts His sacred fire;
- Wisdom, and might, and zeal, and
 love,
 His holy breast inspire.
 He comes the pris'ners to release,
 In Satan's bondage held;
 The gates of brass before Him burst,
 The iron fetters yield.
 Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace!
 Thy welcome shall proclaim;
 And heaven's eternal arches ring
 With Thy beloved name.
- 127 (129). L. M.
 When I survey the wondrous cross
 On which the Prince of glory died,
 My richest gain I count but loss,
 And pour contempt on all my
 pride.
 Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
 Save in the death of Christ, my
 God;
 All the vain things that charm me
 most,
 I sacrifice them to His blood.
 See from His head, His hands, His
 feet,
 Sorrow and love flow mingled
 down;
 Did e'er such love and sorrow meet?
 Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
 Were the whole realm of nature
 mine,
 That were a present far too small;
 Love so amazing, so divine,
 Demands my soul, my life, my all.
179. C. M.
 Let songs of praises fill the sky!
 Christ, our ascended Lord,
 Sends down His Spirit, from on high,
 According to His word.
 The Spirit, by His heavenly breath,
 New life creates within;
 He quickens sinners from the death
 Of trespasses and sin.
 The things of Christ the Spirit takes,
 And to our heart reveals;
 Our bodies He His temple makes,
 And our redemption seals.
 Come, Holy Spirit, from above,
 With Thy celestial fire;
 Come, and, with flames of zeal and
 love,
 Our hearts and tongues inspire.
- 187 (795). 7s.
 Holy Ghost, with light divine,
 Shine upon this heart of mine!
 Chase the shades of night away,
 Turn the darkness into day.
 Let me see my Saviour's face,
 Let me all His beauties trace;
 Show those glorious truths to me,
 Which are only known to Thee.
 Holy Ghost, with joy divine,
 Cheer this sadden'd heart of mine;
 Bid my many woes depart,
 Heal my wounded, bleeding heart.
- 191 (148). S. M.
 See what a living stone
 The builders did refuse!
 Yet God hath built His Church
 thereon,
 In spite of envious Jews.
- Hosanna to the King
 Of David's royal blood!
 Bless Him, ye saints, He comes to
 bring
 Salvation from our God.
 Oh, come the happy hour
 When all the world shall own
 Thy Son, O God, declared with
 power,
 And worship at Thy throne!
 We bless Thy holy word
 Which all this grace displays;
 And offer on Thine altar, Lord,
 Our sacrifice of praise.
- 227 (892). C. M.
 Behold, the mountain of the Lord
 In latter days shall rise
 Above the mountains and the hills,
 And draw the wond'ring eyes.
 To this, the joyful nations round,
 All tribes and tongues, shall flow:
 "Up to the hill of God," they say,
 "And to His house, we'll go."
 The beam that shines on Zion's hill
 Shall lighten ev'ry land:
 The King who reigns in Zion's
 towers
 Shall all the world command.
 No strife shall vex Messiah's reign,
 Or mar the peaceful years;
 To ploughshares men shall beat
 their swords,
 To pruning-hooks their spears.
- 275 (226). S. M.
 The Spirit, in our hearts,
 'Is whispering, "Sinners, come!"'
 The bride, the Church of Christ,
 proclaims
 To all His children, "Come!"
 Let him that heareth say
 "To all about him 'come!'"
 Let him that thirsts for righteous-
 ness,
 To Christ the Fountain come.
 Yes, whosoever will,
 Oh, let him freely come,
 And freely drink the stream of life:
 'Tis Jesus bids him come.
 Lo! Jesus who invites,
 Declares, "I quickly come!"
 Lord, even so! we wait Thine hour!
 O blest Redeemer, come!
- 300 (835). 7s.
 Jesus, save my dying soul,
 Make the broken spirit whole;
 Humbled in the dust I lie;
 Saviour, leave me not to die.
 Jesus, full of ev'ry grace,
 Now reveal Thy smiling face;
 Grant the joy of sin forgiven,
 Foretaste of the bliss of heaven.
 All my guilt to Thee is known—
 Thou art righteous, Thou alone;
 All my help is from Thy cross;
 All besides I count but loss.
 Lord, in Thee I now believe;
 Wilt Thou—wilt Thou not forgive?
 Helpless at Thy feet I lie;
 Saviour, leave me not to die.

11. 8s & 7s.
Praise the Lord! ye heavens, adore Him,
Praise Him, angels in the height;
Sun and moon, rejoice before Him;
Praise Him, all ye stars of light!

Praise the Lord—for He hath spoken;
Worlds His mighty voice obeyed;
Laws which never shall be broken,
For their guidance He hath made.

Praise the Lord—for He is glorious;
Never shall His promise fail;
God hath made His saints victorious,
Sin and death shall not prevail.

Praise the God of our salvation,
Hosts on high His power proclaim;
Heaven and earth, and all creation,
Laud and magnify His name.

33. L. M.
Thee we adore, eternal Lord!
We praise Thy name with one accord;
Thy saints, who here Thy goodness see,
Through all the world do worship Thee.

To Thee aloud all angels cry,
And ceaseless raise their songs on high,
Both cherubim and seraphim,
The heavens and all the powers therein.

The apostles join the glorious throng;
The prophets swell the immortal song;
The martyrs' noble army raise
Eternal anthems to Thy praise.

Thee, holy Prophet, Priest, and King!

Thee, Saviour of mankind they sing;
Thus earth below, and heaven above,
Resound Thy glory and Thy love.

62. 8s & 7s.
God is love; His mercy brightens
All the path in which we rove;
Bless He wakes and woe He lightens;
God is wisdom, God is love.

Chance and change are busy ever;
Man decays, and ages move;
But His mercy waneth never;
God is wisdom, God is love.

Even the hour that darkest seemeth,
Will His changeless goodness prove;
From the gloom His brightness streameth,
God is wisdom, God is love.

He with earthly cares entwineth
Hope and comfort from above;
Everywhere His glory shineth;
God is wisdom, God is love.

86 (437). C. M.
O God of Jacob, by whose hand
Thy people still are fed;
Who, through this weary pilgrimage,
Hast all our fathers led!

Through each perplexing path of life
Our wandering footsteps guide;
Give us each day our daily bread
And raiment fit provide.

Oh, spread Thy covering wings
around,
Till all our wanderings cease,

And at our Father's loved abode
Our souls arrive in peace!

To Thee, as to our cov'nant God,
We'll our whole selves resign;
And thankful own that all we are,
And all we have, is Thine.

108 (165). 8s & 7s.
One there is above all others
Well deserves the name of Friend,
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end.

Which of all our friends, to save us,
Could or would have shed his blood?

But this Saviour died to have us
Reconciled in Him to God.

When He lived on earth abased,
Friend of sinners was His name;
Now, above all glory raised,
He rejoices in the same.

Oh, for grace our hearts to soften!
Teach us, Lord, at length to love:
We, alas! forget too often
What a Friend we have above.

135 (320). S. M.
Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience
peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they.

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While as a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful
voice,
And sing His bleeding love.

141. C. M.
Thou art my hiding-place, O Lord!
In Thee I put my trust,
Encouraged by Thy holy word—
A feeble child of dust.

I have no argument beside,
I urge no other plea;
And 'tis enough the Saviour died,
The Saviour died for me!

When storms of fierce temptation
beat,
And furious foes assail,
My refuge is the mercy-seat,
My hope within the veil.

158. 6s & 4s.
Glory to God on high!
Let heaven and earth reply,
"Praise ye His name!"
His love and grace adore,
Who all our sorrows bore,
Sing loud forevermore,
"Worthy the Lamb!"

While they around the throne
Cheerfully join in one,
Praising His name,—
Ye who have felt His blood
Scaling your peace with God,
Sound His dear name abroad,
"Worthy the Lamb!"

Join, all ye ransom'd race,
Our Lord and God to bless:
Praise ye His name!
In Him we will rejoice,

And make a joyful noise,
Shouting with heart and voice,
"Worthy the Lamb!"

181 (173). L. M.
Come, gracious Spirit, heavenly
Dove,
With light and comfort from above;
Be Thou our guardian, Thou our
guide;
O'er ev'ry thought and step preside.

Conduct us safe, conduct us far
From ev'ry sin and hurtful snare:
Lead to Thy word, that rules must
give,
And teach us lessons how to live.

The light of truth to us display,
That we may know and love Thy
way;
Plant holy fear in ev'ry heart,
That we from Thee may ne'er depart.

194. C. M.
Oh, where are kings and empires
now,
Of old that went and came?
But, Lord, Thy Church is praying
yet,
A thousand years the same.

We mark her goodly battlements,
And her foundations strong;
We hear within the solemn voice
Of her unending song.

For not like kingdoms of the world
Thy holy Church, O God!
Though earthquake shocks are
threat'ning her,
And tempests are abroad;

Unshaken as eternal hills,
Immovable she stands,
A mountain that shall fill the earth,
A house not made by hands.

304. S. M. D.
O Thou who wouldst not have
One wretched sinner die,
Who didst Thyself, my soul to save
From endless misery!
Show me the way to shun
Thy dreadful wrath severe,
That when Thou comest on Thy
throne
I may with joy appear.

Thou art Thyself the Way,
Thyself in me reveal;
So shall I pass my life's short day
Obedient to Thy will;
So shall I love my God,
Because He first loved me,
And praise Thee in Thy bright
abode,
Through all eternity.

365. S. M.
My spirit on Thy care,
Blest Saviour, I recline;
Thou wilt not leave me to despair,
For Thou art Love divine.

In Thee I place my trust,
On Thee I calmly rest:
I know Thee good, I know Thee
just,
And count Thy choice the best.

Whate'er events betide,
Thy will they all perform;
Safe in Thy breast my head I hide,
Nor fear the coming storm.

Let good or ill befall,
It must be good for me;
Secure of having Thee in all,
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 Born to raise the sons of earth; Born to give them sec-ond birth.

Joy - ful, all ye nations, rise; Join the triumph of the skies:
 Vail'd in flesh, the Godhead see, Hail th'incarnate De - i - ty;

With th'angel - ic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem."
 Pleased as man with men t'ap-pear, Je - sus, our Im-man-uel, here.

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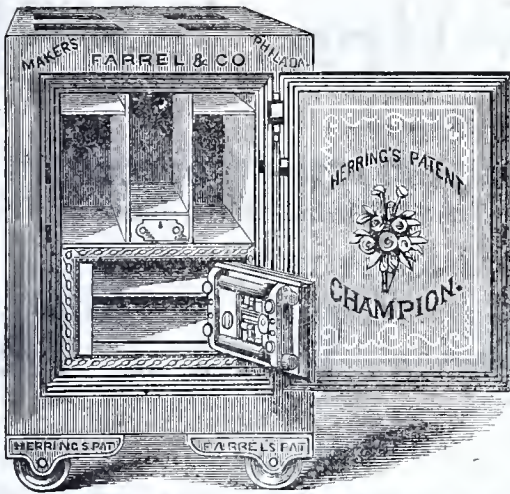
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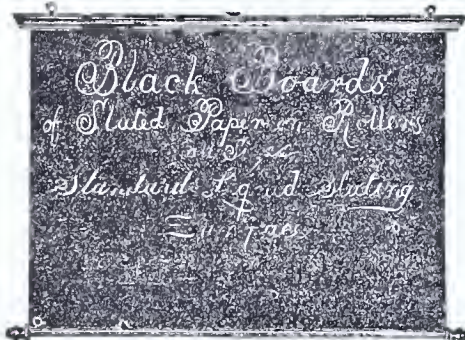
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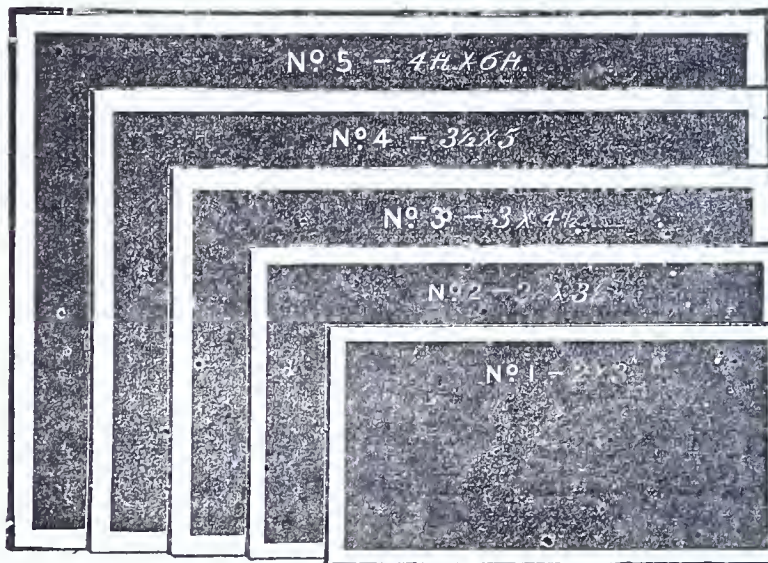


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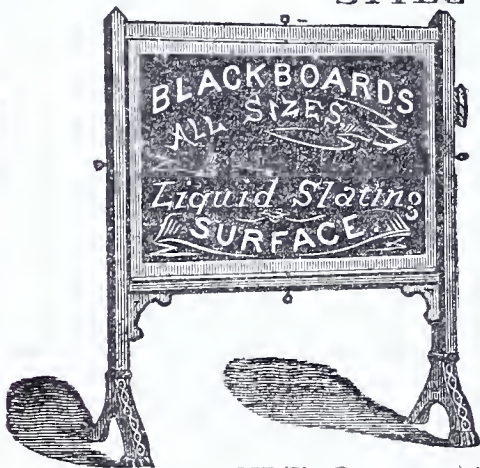
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